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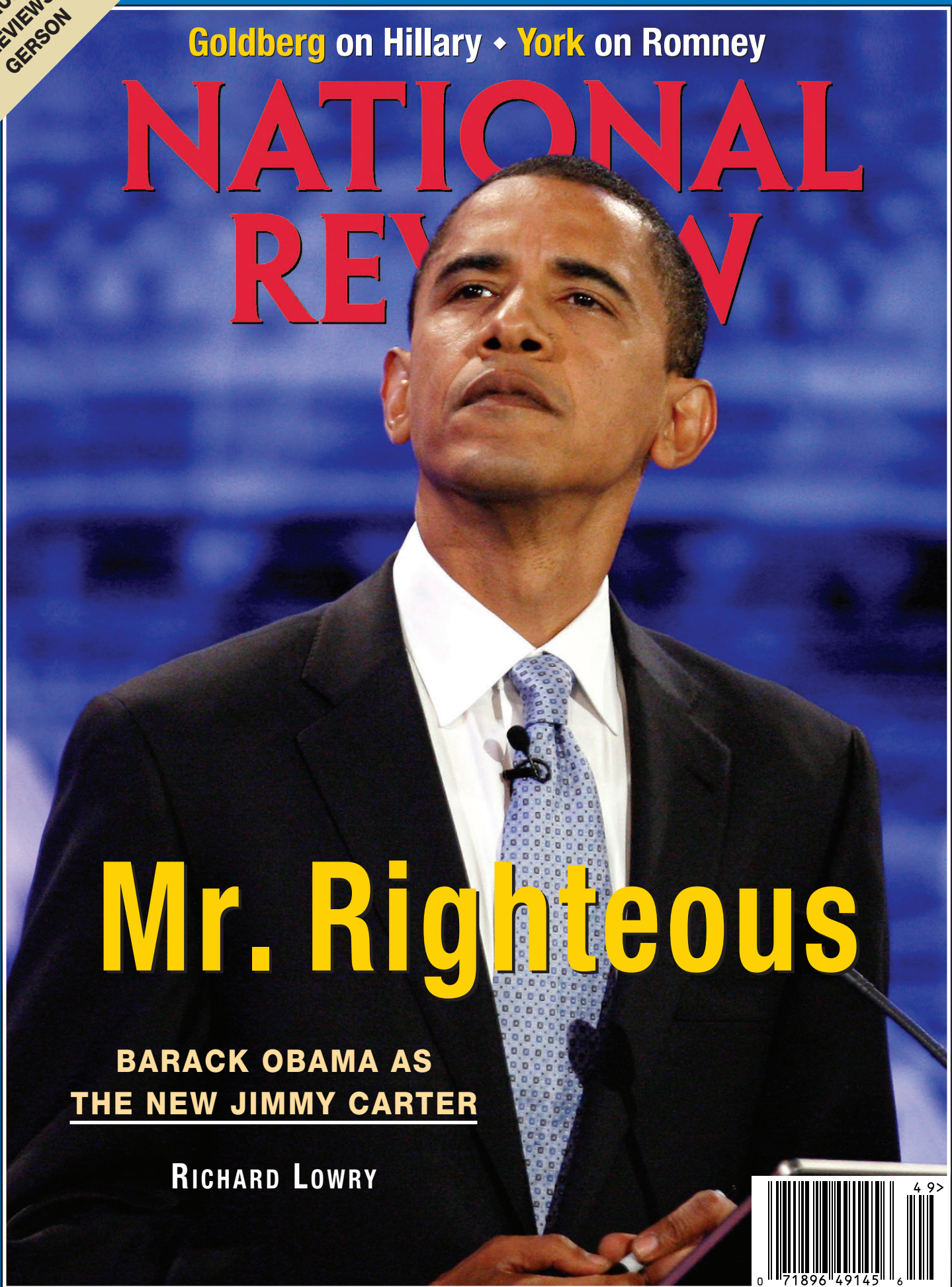
NATIONAL REVIEW



Mr. Righteous

BARACK OBAMA AS THE NEW JIMMY CARTER

RICHARD LOWRY

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NATIONAL REVIEW

DECEMBER 3, 2007 VOL. LIX, NO. 22

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■ COVER STORY

Cut from the Same Cloth

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Barack Obama comes from a long line of thoughtful, achingly idealistic reformers in Democratic presidential politics. They inspire people, impress everyone with their resplendent good intentions, eschew rough-and-tumble politics as usual—and lose. And yet, there's a counterexample of this kind of reformer prevailing in which Obama can take some comfort—one James Earl Carter Jr. *By Richard Lowry*

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letters to the editor

ON YOUR OATH

As a loyal subscriber to the smartest publication on the planet, I would like to express my disappointment over the violation of the Third Commandment in the title of Mr. Buckley's new book (advertised on page 59 of the November 19 issue). I am not so naïve as to think that WFB's vocabulary is pure as the wind-driven snow; yet surely his correspondence contained another memorable quote that could have been transformed into an equally memorable title. Instead, the book vainly bears the Lord's name in BIG BLACK CAPITAL LETTERS, for all His creation to read. (Ah, if only all creation had the literary and political sense to read WFB and NATIONAL REVIEW.)

Evan Archilla
Comfort, Tex.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Buckley faced similar criticism some 40 years ago. His answer—reprinted in the book—was as follows:

> I am not really blaspheming, or in any case, do not mean to be blaspheming, blaspheming being one of those things I am against. "Goddam" is nowadays a simple expletive, an intensifier. It is that by cultural usage. In the most cloistered convent in Catholic Spain, you will hear from the venerable lips of an aged nun, "Jesus Mary and Joseph, I forgot my umbrella!" "I would pray hard to his Maker to save his soule notwithstanding all his God-damnes," a writer is quoted by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as saying in 1647, back when they were fighting religious wars. Three hundred years later, the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* lists "God damn" and "goddam" as "a profane [i.e., a-religious] oath, once a strong one invoking God's curse, now a general exclamation . . . used as an intensive."

CAPTAIN PRIME MINISTER?

Mr. Gilbert's choice for president (Letters, November 19) has one minor problem: While Capt. James Tiberius Kirk is a farm boy from Iowa, William Shatner is proud to be Canadian!

Richard Tengdin
Costa Mesa, Calif.

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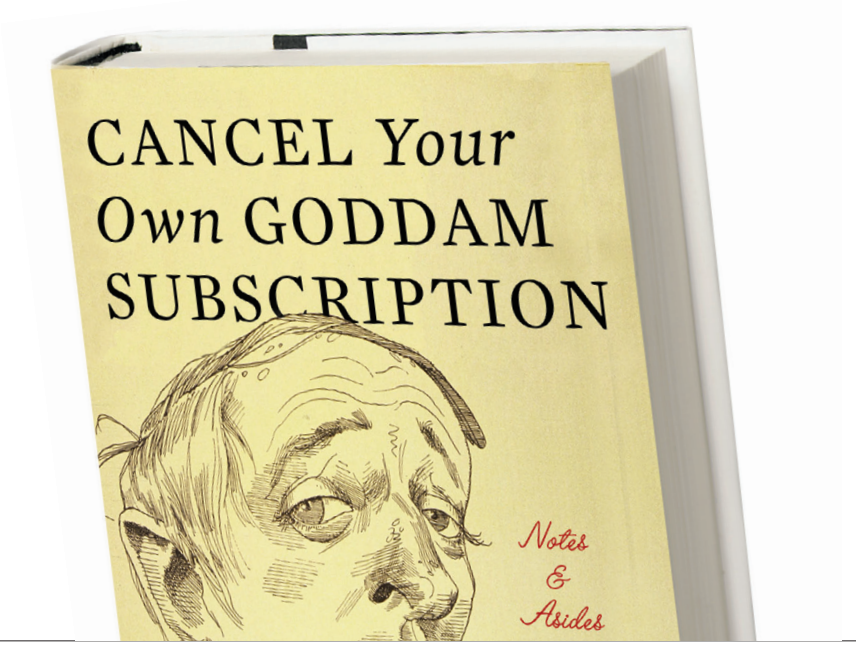

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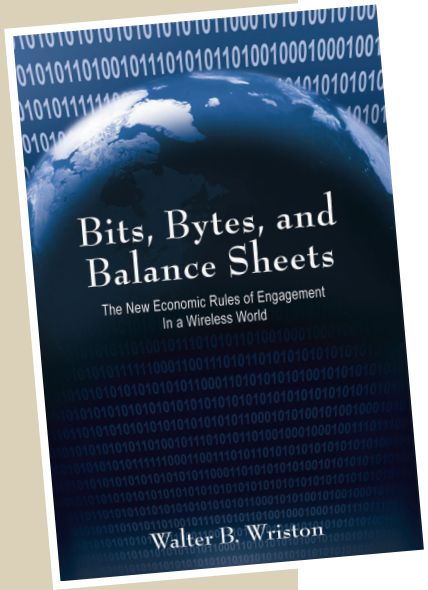

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THE WEEK

■ Hillary Clinton says that her competitors are picking on her because she's a woman. Hey, Hillary: If you can't stand the heat, stay in the kitchen.

■ Rudolph Giuliani is getting ever closer to his final answer on abortion. He told a social-conservative gathering that as president he would veto any weakening of existing anti-abortion policies and sign any reasonable restriction on abortion. Pat Robertson endorsed him, reasoning that he would effectively prosecute the War on Terror and nominate conservative judges. Pro-lifers have their doubts. Legislation to ban or to authorize human cloning—the mass production of human embryos to be destroyed in research—may reach the next president's desk. Giuliani has not said what he would do. Nor has he said that *Roe* v. *Wade* is bad law and that states should be allowed to set their own abortion policies. If he is unable to identify the most outrageous judicial usurpation of democratic authority in the last 40 years for what it is, how credible is his promise to appoint conservative judges? Giuliani still has time to get off the fence on *Roe*, but only a little.

■ Fred Thompson may have started his presidential campaign late, but he is the first candidate in either party to come out with solid plans to reform Social Security and immigration. To keep Social Security solvent, he would make sure that retirees' benefits keep up with inflation, but not let them grow any faster. He would also borrow the best Democratic idea, creating investment accounts outside the Social Security system. These accounts would make it easier for workers, especially low-income workers, to build up assets of their own. On immigration, he rejects the notion that we must choose between deporting millions of people overnight and granting them citizenship. Instead, he would gradually shrink the illegal population by stepping up enforcement. The other candidates say that they want to fix entitlements and control our borders, but only Thompson has outlined a specific, conservative plan of action. We hope the other candidates follow his lead.

■ The purity of Rep. Ron Paul's libertarianism has won him an impressively dedicated bunch of followers. The Republican, running for president, has gained some new fans in liberals who like the anti–Iraq War implications of his isolationism. But even if one judges the Iraq War a disaster, this hardly vindicates Paul's foreign policy. He would not have had us fight the *first* Gulf War, leaving Saddam Hussein in charge of Kuwait and, by extension, the whole Middle East. His domestic policy is equally otherworldly. He favors tax cuts and free trade in principle, but votes against actual tax cuts and trade deals because they don't go far enough. His

See page 12

political philosophy might work just fine—if only everyone in the country, or the world, were a libertarian.

■ Michael Mukasey was confirmed as attorney general by a 53–40 vote. The Democrats who voted against him—and a few who voted for him—said that they were appalled that Mukasey was not willing to say that waterboarding constitutes torture and is therefore illegal. Never mind that Congress has made no such statement, the Senate having voted down legislation to do so. Waterboarding, a kind of simulated drowning, is a very rough tactic that should be used sparingly. But we employ it to train our own operatives to resist interrogation—something we could not do if it were the moral or legal equivalent of torture. (We don't, for instance, pull out the fingernails of our trainees.) Mukasey was right not to give his tormentors the answer they were looking for.

■ Republicans lost the Kentucky governorship and the Virginia state senate. Local issues played a big role. Gov. Ernie Fletcher has spent almost all of his term in a scandal about the state's tough civil-service rules, and Virginia Republicans have split

ROMAN GENN

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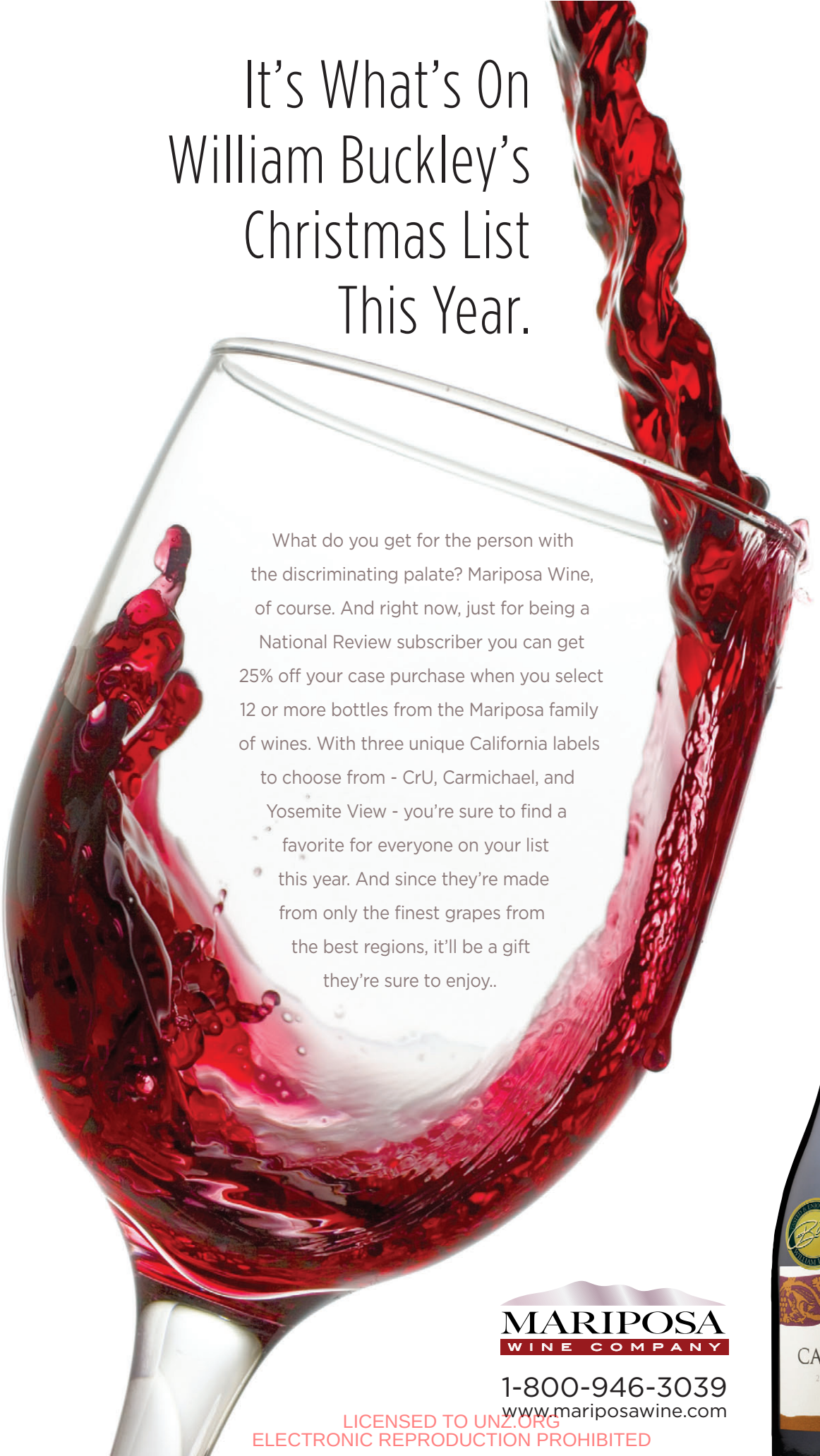
It's What's On William Buckley's Christmas List This Year.



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The Week...

along regional lines over whether to raise taxes to pay for improved transportation. But the results in both states also reflected the weakness of the GOP's national reputation. Republicans need to become the party of morally upright problem-solvers, and until they do there will be more disappointing Election Days in our future.

■ School choice suffered a new blow in Utah, where voters rejected a ballot initiative that would have given parents more control over their children's education. The defeat follows previous referendum failures in California, Colorado, and Michigan. Reformers had hoped that conservative Utah would decide differently, but the national teacher unions mobilized to defeat the measure (by one estimate, the National Education Association spent $1 for every teacher in America). The real losers are kids who remain stuck in government-run schools—not just in Utah, but in other states that might have found inspiration in Utah's example, had it set one.

■ Last year President Bush cast his first veto. Now Congress has overridden one of his vetoes for the first time. Harry Reid and friendly commentators call it a reassertion of the legisla-

FRANK RICH: ERIK SLUMPTON/SIPA

Backward March

We hear a lot of bleating and whining from liberals these days about the parlous state of our democracy. For example, Frank Rich of the *New York Times*—and I am not making this up—flatly said that President Bush "assault[ed]" our democracy so severely that we are little different from Pervez Musharraf's Pakistan. He said it after Musharraf imposed martial law.

To call this stupid is really an insult to stupidity. Rich is hardly alone in suggesting that Americans are living under a quasi-dictatorship. It is, in fact, a common theme in liberal polemics of late. It seems lost on all of them that if what they were saying were even remotely true, they wouldn't be allowed to say it.

Still, the irony of Rich's critique deserves special ridicule because in the 1990s, he made it his beat to mock the allegedly paranoid style of the anti-Clinton Right. Now Rich places himself alongside the sweaty ham-radio operators and religious militiamen he once tried to elevate to prominent conservative spokesmen. Of course, Frank Rich is a prominent liberal spokesman, and therein lies the biggest difference between these two types of political paranoia.

But where do these ideas come from? I think a clue comes from the same op-ed. Rich admits to a burning nostalgia for the 1960s. The Vietnam era had it over today because at least "during that unpopular war, disaffected Americans took to the streets and sometimes broke laws in an angry assault on American governmental institutions. The Bush years have brought an even more effective assault on those institutions from within. While the public has not erupted in riots, the executive branch has subverted the rule of law in often secretive increments. The results amount to a quiet coup, ultimately more insidious than a blatant putsch like General Musharraf's."

Stop laughing. This is serious.

Seen through Rich's Vaseline-smeared lens, the anti-war movement was a glorious overflowing of direct democracy. But it is worth recalling that many of those earnest young protesters—many of their leaders, particularly—were deeply hostile to democracy. At Columbia, Berkeley, and other campuses across the country, the anti-war organizers didn't hang posters of Jefferson or Madison, but of Ho Chi Minh, Mao, and Che Guevara. Indeed, a poll of college students in 1968 found that 42 percent of college kids didn't care about a practical college education. Within this subset of students, more kids identified with the murderous Communist Che Guevara than with any of the presidential candidates.

At the 1968 convention, the kids didn't chant "no taxation without representation." They chanted "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh!" The SDS looked to link up with Castro's Cuba, not with, say, democratic and peace-loving Switzerland. The Black Panthers, who shot cops and robbed banks, were fêted on Central Park West and defended by good anti-war liberals at Yale and elsewhere. Most of the kids, to be sure, were not lickspittles of murderers and tyrants. But even this majority was out there for reasons no more grandiose than the desire not to be drafted.

Even today, shouldn't it tell us something that on the asinine left, the hero du jour isn't a democracy activist in Cuba or Iran, but Hugo Chávez?

The hole in the soul of American liberalism was torn open in the 1960s when liberalism decided that being on the right side was more important than being right. For Frank Rich, American conservatism must always be the source of creeping totalitarianism, no matter how unpersuasive the evidence; while liberalism is always on the side of democracy, no matter how high the mountain of evidence saying otherwise.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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THE WEEK...

ture's constitutional authority—as though anyone doubted that Congress had this power. It was exercised not for any high principle: At issue was all the pork congressmen had inserted into a water bill. That pork has huge bipartisan support. The president was right to veto the bill, however, in order to increase his credibility for the spending battles to come. Would that congressional Republicans had a little bit more.

■ Paper or a biodegradable material made from corn starch? This question has replaced the more traditional "Paper or plastic?" at San Francisco supermarkets, and the New York City Council may follow suit. The bill that council speaker Christine C. Quinn is pushing would not go as far as the San Francisco law, which banned plastic bags outright. But it would impose a new burden on city supermarkets by requiring them to collect, transport, and recycle used bags. The supermarkets will surely pass on the cost of this new requirement to the consumer in the form of higher prices, yet to our knowledge the plastic-bag debate is proceeding in the absence of any serious cost/benefit analysis. The main knock against plastic bags is that they are not biodegradable. But organic alternatives to plastic, while biodegradable in theory, break down very slowly inside airless landfills, where they actually take up more room than plastic materials. Seeing no compelling evidence that the benefits of yet another mandatory recycling program outweigh the costs, our take on this bill is simple: Bag it.

■ In a long-overdue vote, the House passed a free-trade agreement with Peru over considerable Democratic opposition. It faces less resistance in the Senate, which will probably act before the end of the year. The Bush administration has also sent trade agreements with Colombia and Panama to Capitol Hill, but House Ways and Means Committee chairman Charles Rangel has said those deals will have to wait for now. This is a shame, for reasons economic and strategic. First, the agreements with Peru, Colombia, and Panama are about reciprocity. The vast majority of what we import from those countries already comes in duty-free thanks to regional trade agreements we signed years ago. The new trade agreements simply open the Peruvian, Colombian, and Panamanian markets to American-made goods. Second, passage of the deals would advance important strategic interests of ours. Hugo Chávez continues trying to spread anti-Americanism across Latin America. Stronger economic ties between the U.S. and the countries in Chávez's neighborhood would help isolate him and check his influence. Rangel and Speaker Nancy Pelosi deserve credit for standing up to their party's growing protectionist wing to pass the Peru agreement. But given the deal's obvious advantages, it shouldn't have been so hard.

■ The Senate is set to consider the Law of the Sea Treaty, which has the Bush administration's blessing. Senators should say no. The treaty's codification of existing maritime law, while modestly useful, grants the U.S. no rights it does not already possess under earlier and customary law. Those who argue, as U.S. Navy lawyers do, that the treaty will help the Navy assert American rights over North Pole oil (supposing such oil exists in large quantities) must explain (a) why the supra-national agencies that will rule on treaty disputes can be counted on to support the U.S. position; (b) who will enforce a favorable ruling over Russian or other objections apart from—the U.S. Navy; and (c) exactly why, if other powers will be required to help the U.S. enforce a favorable decision under (b), the U.S. Navy will not be required to enforce other decisions of no concern to the U.S. The short answer is that the U.S. gains nothing important under the treaty. But we do submit to supra-national authority on a range of maritime rights; to the international regulation of U.S. corporations' access to seabed mineral resources; and to the first independent international taxing authority. Life is full of tradeoffs . . . or not.

ERIC FEFERBERG/AFP

■ Nicolas Sarkozy came to Washington, and a friendly affair it was. This was understandable: He is only embarking on his course, but the signs are that he wants to lead France and Europe in directions more compatible with U.S. policy while still distinctly "Europeanist." An early test of his sincerity (or vision) may be available in relation to NATO. John Bolton has expressed the serious hope that Sarkozy might rejoin NATO's military structure (which de Gaulle left in the 1960s). Such a dramatic reversal of a policy would shake the French establishment, Left and Right. Still, you can't rule it out when Sarkozy, accused of pro-Americanism, replies with bold Gallic wit: "Oh, yes. It's true. Don't torture me. I confess. Here is a country, one of the few across the world apart from Poland, with which we have never been at war. It is really not a reason to hate each other."

■ In Cuba, police rounded up a group of young people for wearing white rubber wristbands inscribed with a word: *Cambio*—Change. The U.S. secretary of commerce, Cuban-born Carlos Gutierrez, wears one too. When the Cuban youth were rounded up—at least 70 of them—he remarked that this was exactly why his native country needed what the wristbands were asking for: *Cambio*. A better observation could not have been made.

■ During his recent European tour, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia had an audience with the Pope in the Vatican. Presumably the Vicar of Christ and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques traded tips on the almost-extinct art of running a theocratic state. About a million Catholics live in Saudi Arabia, Filipino guest workers being the largest group. The Pope made a plea for them to be allowed more freedom in gathering and worshipping. Alas, if Abdullah were to allow

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I'll take mine black...no sugar

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THE WEEK...

that, the barely controlled forces of jihadism in his country might erupt, possibly sweeping him and his regime away altogether. We have no information on the situation of Muslims resident in Vatican City, but it is not likely their assemblies are broken up by the Swiss Guard, as Christian congregations in the Kingdom sometimes are by the Muslim authorities. Still, credit should be given to Abdullah for at least showing some conciliatory spirit in the long process of mending relations after His Holiness's Regensburg speech last year—although those fond of symbolism might note that the gifts exchanged at the meeting's conclusion were, from Pope to King, a 16th-century engraving of the Vatican; from King to Pope, a gold, jewel-encrusted . . . *sword*.

ABDULLAH/BENEDICT: CHRIS HELGREN/AFP HUCKABEE: JOE BURBANK

■ The student president at the University of the Andes in Hugo Chávez's Venezuela bears the very mellifluous, in fact Milhousian, name Nixon Moreno. Pursued by the authorities, Sr. Moreno has been obliged to take asylum in the papal diplomatic mission to his nation's capital, Caracas. His cause has been taken up by the student president of Central University of Venezuela, a neighboring institution. That brave young gentleman's name is Stalin González. Stalin leading protests in support of Nixon? This is not remarkable in Venezuela, which has been afflicted by a plague of whimsical forenames. Your waiter or cab driver in Caracas is liable to be a Taj-Mahal, a Supermán, a Yesaidú (Yes, I do), or even a Hitler. Things are so bad that the electoral authorities have issued a draft law stating that babies may not be registered with names "that expose them to ridicule, are extravagant, or difficult to pronounce." Well, at least it's hard to detect much revolutionary ardor in most of these names, such as was exhibited in the old USSR by the popular Melsor (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, October Revolution), or in Mao's China by Da-yue (Great Leap) and Wen-ge (Cultural Revolution).

■ NFL scouts are after him, but Adam Ballard, a senior fullback at the Naval Academy, isn't biting. "Being a Marine fits my mentality," he said, explaining why he's seeking a commission that would deny him a shot at a professional career. "I don't see myself as one who sits back. I like to be down in the dirt with a gun in my hand." For Ballard, it's more than a simple call to action: "When I'm older, I want to be able to look at my kids and tell them why they can go to any church and why your mom doesn't have to wear a burqa." Oo-rah!

■ The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) recently won a small victory for freedom of thought. According to FIRE, students at the University of Delaware underwent a series of "treatments" (the university's term) designed to inculcate in them, among other things, a new understanding of what constitutes a racist: "A racist is one who is both privileged and socialized on the basis of race by a white supremacist (racist) system. The term applies to all white people (i.e., people of European descent) living in the United States, regardless of class, gender, religion, culture or sexuality." In other words: To hell with what you actually think; if you're white you're a racist, and if not you're being oppressed. Thanks to FIRE's efforts to publicize the program, it has now been canceled. But we trust that more subtle efforts to brainwash students continue in strength—and not just at the University of Delaware.

■ The Writers' Guild of America has come out on strike against the major movie studios and TV networks. In the long view, this is one more tremor from the tectonic shifts occurring in the world of media, as both audio and video migrate to digital platforms like TiVo and the Internet, raising new issues about compensation for "content providers" and the harvesting of ad revenues. As watchers of politics, we suspect that a writers' strike in this sphere must have been going on unheralded at least since the beginning of the 2008 presidential campaign. The quality of humor, at any rate, on the campaign trail is dire. Take Mike Huckabee, for example, currently being hailed as the Johnny Carson of the GOP field. Sample? Hearing a mobile phone ring in the audience during an Iowa forum, Mike quipped: "That's probably Dick Cheney wanting to take me hunting, and I'm not going

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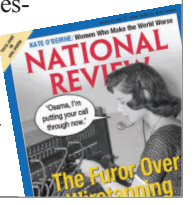

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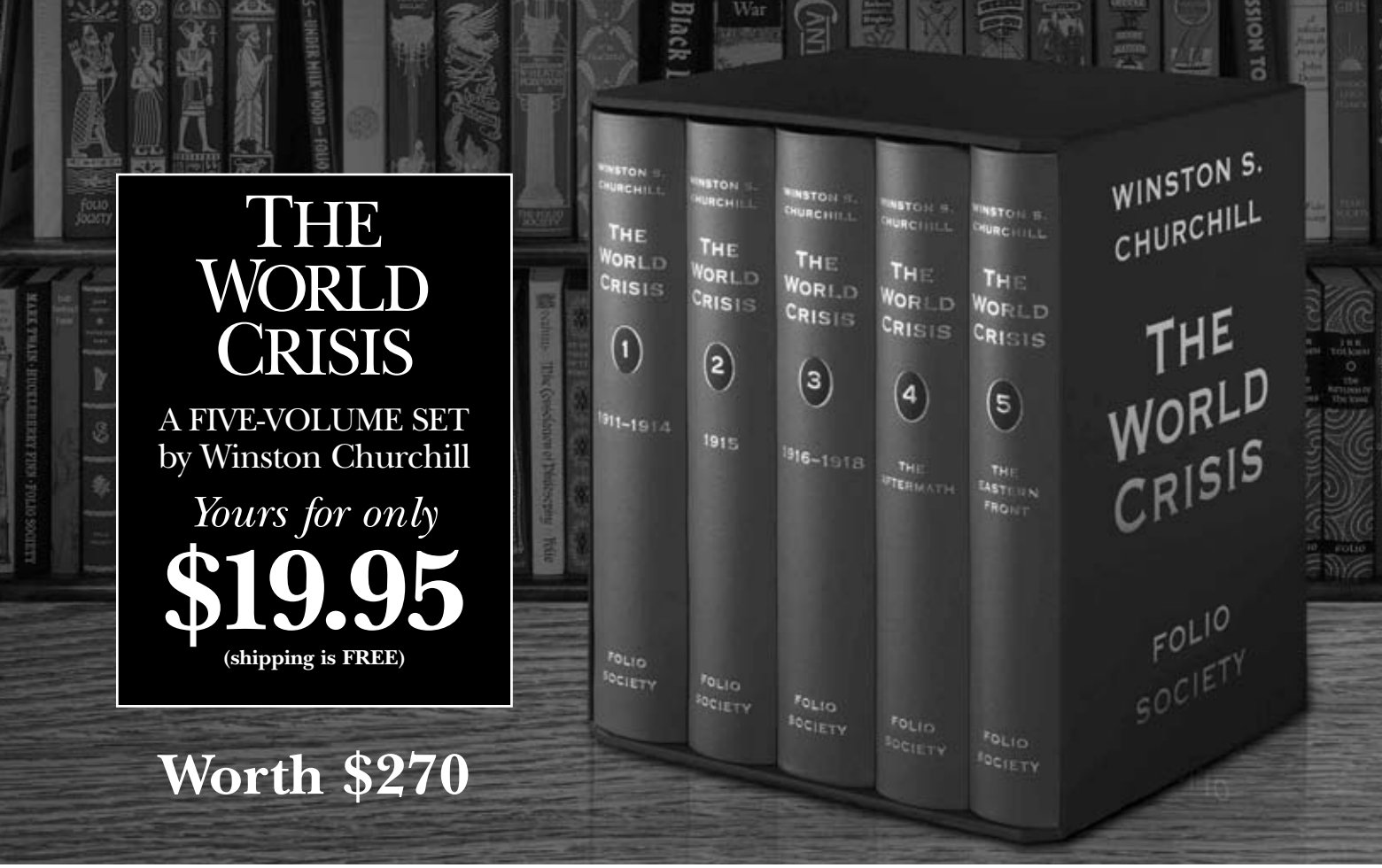

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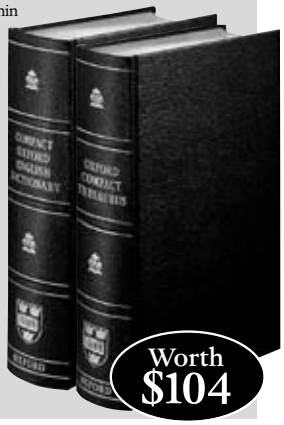

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with him, okay?" Oh, dear. We really need some creative talent here. Could the campaign managers please snap up a few of those writers when the strike is over?

■ Currently touring Europe is a traveling exhibition named the Museum of Broken Relationships. The originators were two Croatian artists who, after splitting up, decided to do something positive with their distress. They collected objects emblematic of the relationship and asked their friends to contribute similar items in the same spirit. One lady brought in the ax she had used to chop up the furniture of her cheating lover. How fitting that the Museum of Broken Relationships should have been conceived in the fragments of what was once Yugoslavia! If the touring exhibit makes it to the U.S., perhaps we could add some broken-relationship mementoes of our own: something from the media to John McCain?

■ "Lamentably, I killed your cat while trying just to sting it. It was crouched, as usual, under one of our bird feeders & I fired from some distance with bird shot. It may ease your grief somewhat to know that the cat was buried properly with a prayer & that I'll be glad to get you another of your choice." Only one person in the U.S., perhaps in the world, could have written those words. That person is Jimmy Carter, the words contained in a letter, recently come to light, that he wrote to his sister-in-law Sybil in 1990. Note the procedural punctiliousness in that word "properly"; the sanctimony in "lamentably"; most revealing of all, the veiled accusation and self-justification in "as usual." Carter is not a wholly bad man; in some ways he is an admirable man. It is only that everything he does and says is marred and stained somehow by his irrepressible flaws of character. Though he was an awful president, Jimmy Carter remains a strange and fascinating study. There is a Ph.D. thesis to be written just on his dealings with small quadrupeds.

■ Daniel C. Searle isn't mentioned in the same breath as the great triumvirate of conservative philanthropists: Olin, Bradley, and Scaife. At least not yet. When he died on October 30, he left behind not only a legacy of grant-making during his life—no individual gave more to the American Enterprise Institute in at least the last 20 years—but also Searle Freedom Trust, a foundation that will promote personal responsibility, economic freedom, and limited government until its scheduled demise in 2025. In business, Searle was known for his leadership at the pharmaceutical firm that bore his family's name—and especially for his wise decision, as board chairman in 1977, to hire as CEO Donald Rumsfeld, who helped revive the company and build his own reputation for leadership. As a philanthropist, Searle took a keen interest in free-market think tanks, developing the talents of young people, and establishing sound operating principles for his foundation to ensure that it will follow the mission he assigned it. Searle remained vigorous until the end, dying at the age of 81 while on a bird-shooting trip in Scotland. R.I.P.

AT WAR

Pakistan on the Brink

When it comes to being "our S.O.B.," Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf has the "S.O.B." part down. We just wish we could have more confidence in the "our."

Musharraf declared a state of emergency that brought back memories of the coup that took him to power in 1999. In the context of Pakistani political history, this move isn't shocking. It's the norm. Pakistan is not a "failed state," but it is a failure as a state; it has never managed to create a stable constitutionalist politics. The latest crisis has been brewing since Musharraf suspended the head of the country's politicized supreme court earlier this year, and was probably fated to come to an unfortunate end once the court—bizarrely—said it would rule on Musharraf's eligibility to stand as a presidential candidate after he had already won reelection in early October. (His victory was the outcome of a deeply flawed vote in the legislature.) It was the possibility that the court might rule against him that prompted Musharraf to act, although he justified his strong-arm tactics by pointing to Pakistan's growing instability.

Pakistan is not a 'failed state,' but it is a failure as a state; it has never managed to create a stable constitutionalist politics.

That instability is deeply alarming, and the primary U.S. interest in Pakistan is that Musharraf, whether he is ruling constitutionally or not, act to end it. Since his initial crackdown on Islamic militants in the immediate aftermath of 9/11—a crackdown that came after extreme diplomatic pressure from the U.S.—Musharraf's effort has been maddeningly on-and-off. The Pakistani army has sustained real losses fighting the Taliban in the tribal areas (1,000 killed over the last six years). But the government has also cut ineffectual peace deals with Taliban-allied tribal leaders and, as a recent *Newsweek* cover story convincingly documents, allowed Islamic militants to establish crucial beachheads in Pakistan's urban areas.

The U.S. should make clear to Musharraf that it is willing to forgive a lot, so long as the Pakistani government shows a commitment to the anti-Islamist campaign that has long been lacking. So far, Musharraf's emergency powers have been directed not at Islamists, but at lawyers and opposition leaders, whom he has thrown into jail by the hundreds. He is now waging a two-front war, against Islamic extremists and secular moderates.

This is why it made sense for the administration prior to this crisis to broker a deal between Musharraf and opposition leader Benazir Bhutto. Bhutto has since called on Musharraf to resign, and Musharraf has been placing her under house arrest literally once a week. We have no illusions about Bhutto, whose own

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government was corrupt and incompetent, but she gives Musharraf an opportunity to widen his political support beyond the army. The fall of the shah in Iran is remembered mostly as a failure of the Carter administration, but the shah did much to seal his own fate by alienating every element in Iranian society that might otherwise have been inclined to back him against the revolution. Musharraf would do well to heed his lesson.

The Bush administration has, correctly, been pushing Musharraf to keep his emergency short, hold parliamentary elections that were scheduled for January, and salvage his deal with Bhutto. Above all, though, we have to keep our eye on the most important ball—a campaign against the Islamists who are a threat to Pakistan, to neighboring Afghanistan, and to our own security. It's a region where, unfortunately, S.O.B.s of all varieties aren't in short supply.

POLITICS

Romney's Religion

One non-Protestant has been elected president in our history. Mitt Romney is being urged to follow John F. Kennedy's example and make a speech taking the "Mormon issue" head on. It is bad advice. Kennedy sought to defuse anti-Catholicism by essentially saying that for purposes of public life he wouldn't be a Catholic. If Romney follows suit, he will be calling his integrity into question. A man so frequently accused of flip-flopping cannot flip-flop about his religion.

Nor should Romney denounce anti-Mormon bigotry. Accusing people who are so far withholding their votes of bigotry is not likely to persuade them to change their minds. Few people who oppose Romney because he is a Mormon are going to come around. Romney's problem, and his opportunity, is a different group of people: those who are not hostile to Mormons but find Mormonism unfamiliar and strange.

Romney need not go into the details of Mormon theology to reassure these people. He need not persuade them that Mormonism is sensible or even that it is a branch of Christianity. He need only say that, although some aspects of his religion may look odd from the outside, those aspects are irrelevant to governing. Distinctively Mormon views on salvation will not affect, and have not affected, Romney's conduct in office. But at the same time he should make it clear that Mormon values *will* have a large effect—and that these values are widely shared.

It is tempting to say that citizens should never consider a candidate's religion when voting, but one can imagine extreme cases where his beliefs were so perverse, and had such alarming implications for government policy, that conscientious citizens would have to take them into account. Romney's Mormonism does not raise these questions, and should not concern voters.

Martin Luther apocryphally said he would rather be governed by a wise Turk than a foolish Christian. Voters should judge Romney on how wise—and trustworthy, and courageous, and competent—he is; not on his religion.

THE ECONOMY

Dollar Down

Bad things happen when the Fed overreacts to negative market psychology. The dollar's continuing slide is a case in point.

Markets have been in a tizzy since the subprime fiasco began, even though the housing market is a tiny fraction of the overall economy. While credit markets have had violent hiccups, the economy has nonetheless kept growing smartly. GDP growth was a whopping 3.9 percent in the third quarter. Yet the Fed cut the federal-funds rate 0.75 percent. The rest of the world saw this capitulation to the market's nervous Nellies as inflationary, and became less willing to hold dollars. If the Fed had acted correctly, responding to the state of the economy rather than to a state of mind, the dollar would be stronger today, and closer to its intrinsic value.

The Fed's inappropriate rate cut makes U.S. assets less attractive. But prices adjust in a free economy. Now that the dollar is lower, U.S. products will become more competitive. This will drive up exports and profits as well as the demand for U.S. assets, which will stanch the bleeding.

But perhaps not enough. Since China continues to peg its currency to the dollar, a lower dollar does nothing to reduce our large trade deficit with that country. Currency traders know that a significant part of our total deficit is thus immune to changes in the dollar's value, and wonder, as do we, how far the dollar can fall before it finds a new trading range. In this environment, downward pressure from mistaken Fed policy will inevitably induce dramatic swings in the dollar.

If the Fed is the cause of the weak dollar, then the dollar will not recover until rates go back up, which may well happen next year if the economy stays as strong as it still seems to be. If the economy weakens, however, the Fed may have to choose between recession and inflation. Small deviations from free-market principle can have outsized consequences.

OBITUARY

Norman Mailer, R.I.P.

In conversation with the book editor of National Review the subject of Norman Mailer of course came up. Passing by the event (he had died on Saturday) as if it were inconsequential was one alternative, ruled out. The most obvious reason being that Mailer was consequential, as a writer and as a human being. The next question was, Ought I to write about him? A commanding reason for this is, I suppose, that I am, so to speak, the principal obituarist at National Review. Another reason is that years ago I had pretty extensive dealings with Norman Mailer.

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The Week...

And so here I am, and I begin by acknowledging the truth of much that is being said about him, that he was a towering figure in American literary life for 60 years, almost unique in his search for notoriety and absolutely unrivaled in his coexistence with it. Roger Kimball of *The New Criterion* has written that Mailer "epitomized a certain species of macho, adolescent radicalism that helped to inure the wider public to displays of violence, anti-American tirades, and sexual braggadocio."

But to delve into one's own little portfolio, Mailer's career sliced by my own when in September 1962 two entrepreneurs rented the Medinah Temple in Chicago, which held over 4,000 people, having engaged Mailer and me to debate on the nature of the right wing in American politics. They found the hall all but sold out for the affair.

It happened that everyone in the world who was sportsminded was in Chicago that week—to view the title match between world heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson and challenger Sonny Liston. Pugnacity reigned for those two or three days, and it pleased Mailer, who was complaining widely about his poverty, that *Playboy* magazine immediately contracted to publish his and my opening statements in their next issue.

* * *

A few years later I had Mailer as a guest on *Firing Line*. "Seeing Buckley and Mailer on the tube yesterday I can't get over it," one critic wrote in the *New York Avatar*, which was briefly the court circular of the underground press. "The greatest representation of the two extremes I've seen in a long time. Conservative meets liberal, right meets left, before meets after. Buckley didn't know what the f*** Mailer was talking about, it just jammed his computer, he even had to resort to childish insults to try and keep up his end." ("Norman Mailer decocts matters of the first philosophical magnitude from an examination of his own ordure, and I am not talking about his books," I had said.)

"Mailer's steady stream of reject material," Mel Lyman went on, "was just too much for Buckley's computer to take, it started smoking. Computers don't get mad, they just smoke when they're overloaded. Buckley is a computer, Mailer is a man. A man can only be categorized and computerized to a certain extent, the greater part of him lies out of definition. Greatness can be *recognized* only. That is why Buckley went all to pieces when Mailer spoke of the 'greatness' he saw in Castro. Buckley could only see the un-American activities accredited to the man, Castro. He could only see him as far as he could define his actions. Mailer could look right at him, like a child, and see a great force, an inner strength, a fearlessness that had nothing to do with right or wrong. This is the sadness of Buckley and all that he represents, it cannot possibly recognize anything greater than itself for it takes all that it sees and reduces it to a lifeless, sterile set of rules and regulations. . . .

"[Buckley] truly believes he has an open mind," this disciple of Mailer wrote. "He is open, you can say *anything* to him, but he has only one thing to say to you, and he is a master at finding ways to say it. I love Buckley, but he makes me very sad, he's completely mastered the art of living in prison but Mailer's mastered the art of what you do after you get out, and Buckley doesn't even know there is an out."

"It didn't start out that way," Roger Kimball wrote. "Mailer was brought up in Brooklyn, 'a nice Jewish boy' as he once put it, from a middle-class family of first-generation immigrants. It was a background from which he had long endeavored to escape." Norman Podhoretz, in his memoir *Ex-Friends*, observed that "Mailer would spend the rest of his life overcoming the stigma of this reputation as a 'nice Jewish boy' by doing as an adult all the hooliganish things he had failed to do in childhood and adolescence." There was a hint of this struggle in his appearance on *Firing Line*, where I failed to absorb what the underground press was so eager for me to discover.

* * *

Mailer took two practical steps that bounced off our Chicago exchange. The first was to sue *Playboy*—on the grounds that, manifestly, his essay was worth more than the $5,000 paid to us. That done, he said he wished to explore with me a string of Buckley–Mailer debates throughout the country, "beginning in Carnegie Hall."

This initiative brought him and his wife to our house in Stamford, Conn., and I took him out on my 36-foot sailboat. He could not believe it when I turned the wheel over to him, pointing out a course to the end of the harbor. It was very cold by the time we had finished dinner, but he ordered his wife Jeannie to the back of his motorcycle, and they zoomed off to Brooklyn.

There were other episodes. There was the night in New York when, after dinner, I said I needed to file a column, but he wasn't ready to go home, pursuing us to our apartment nearby. Wobbling up the steps, his then-current wife passed out and was placed by my wife in a spare bedroom. Norman climbed upstairs with me to my study, and spoke disparagingly of the column as, paragraph after paragraph, I gave it to him to read. Finally he said it was time to go home, and we walked down the stairs to where his wife had been taken. But rousing her from that sleep defied any resource we were willing to deploy, so Norman announced fatalistically that, never mind, she would eventually rise, go out the street door, and get a cab. "Me, I'm going home, Slugger," as he called my wife. I helped him find a cab.

* * *

But Norman Mailer is a towering writer! So why this small talk? Perhaps because it no longer seems so very small. I said about Mailer a few years ago that he created the most beautiful metaphors in the language. I reiterate that. But I go further, wondering out loud whether the obituaries are, finally, drawing attention to the phenomenon of Norman Mailer from the appropriate perspective. The newspaper of record says of him, as though such a profile were routine, that he was married six times, that he nearly killed one wife with a penknife, and that he had nine children. What if he had had seven wives, the seventh of them abandoned there in somebody's bedroom, waiting for a taxi to take her home, any home? Would that have claimed the obituarists' attention?

—WFB

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■ 2008 ■

Rudy Wins the Pundit Primary

Conservative journalists choose up

RAMESH PONNURU

RUDOLPH GIULIANI may not win New Hampshire, but he has already won the pundit primary. It's not even close. Quite a few conservative journalists are in Giuliani's corner. His rivals have no similar support.

The Giuliani bandwagon includes conservative commentator John Podhoretz, *New York Post* columnist Ryan Sager, *American Spectator* reporters Philip Klein and Jennifer Rubin, and the editors of the *New York Sun*. Several writers affiliated with NR or NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE are also on board. David Frum and David Pryce-Jones are formally affiliated with the Giuliani campaign. Richard Brookhiser has endorsed the former mayor's run, as has Lisa Schiffren. Deroy Murdock regularly turns out supportive commentary. George Will has not turned his column into a platform for Giuliani, but the mayor has not missed an opportunity to repeat Will's comment that he was the most successful conservative executive of the last fifty years.

The other Republican candidates can count their supporters in the commentariat on one hand, or even two fingers. Mitt Romney has the support of Hugh Hewitt, but Hewitt is more of a talk-show host than an opinion journalist (although the categories of course overlap). NRO's editor, Kathryn Jean Lopez, provided Romney a lot of favorable coverage in 2006, but in recent months has taken a more neutral view of the candidates. Fred Thompson generally gets sympathetic treatment from *The Weekly Standard*'s Stephen Hayes, but Hayes is a reporter rather than an advocate. That magazine's editor, William Kristol, has tilted toward Thompson only slightly. His support has consisted of little more than talking up Thompson's chances. Fred Barnes, meanwhile, has endorsed McCain (as have I).

Geography accounts for some of the lopsided support for Giuliani. There aren't a lot of conservatives in New York City, but a disproportionate share of conservative writers live in New York—and almost all of them support Giuliani. They are grateful to him for saving the city. During his mayoralty they grew to admire his strengths and discount his weaknesses.

Giuliani was also very close to the Manhattan Institute; no other candidate has had as tight a connection to a conservative think tank. It stands to reason that he would have more support among conservative intellectuals, including writers, as a result of that connection.

Brookhiser and Murdock are two Giuliani backers who are also pro-lifers. But it is Giuliani's support for keeping abortion legal that has increased his appeal to other pundits. Sager hopes that Giuliani will reduce what he regards as the baleful influence of social conservatives on the Republican party. (Sager has written a book that argues that religious conservatives are narrowing the party's appeal.) One can surmise that some of the other Giuliani pundits want to see Republicans and conservatives downplay abortion, but do not want to take on pro-lifers frontally. Because Giuliani is not running an abortion-centric candidacy, as previous pro-choice Republican presidential aspirants have, they can endorse him without explicitly slighting pro-lifers.

The Rudy pundits also signify a change in the nature of the conservative media. Giuliani isn't just getting more praise from it than the other Republican candidates. He is getting more than Republican primary candidates have typically received in the past. Conservative writers generally rooted for the Republican nominee in general elections. And they rooted for consensus conservative choices such as Goldwater in 1964 or Reagan in 1980 in both the primaries and the general election. But the phenomenon of conservative scribes' splitting into opposing camps during a primary, or backing a candidate who isn't the choice of most conservatives, is relatively new. Another novelty is that Giuliani's campaign includes, as official advisers, people who remain working journalists.

The watershed was in 2000, when

BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

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George W. Bush and John McCain contended for the Republican nomination. A lot of conservative journalists and publications picked sides in that race—and most of those who did picked McCain. (A few of the pundits backing Giuliani now backed McCain then.) At the time, however, the trend wasn't noticeable, because the press as a whole was so adulatory of McCain. His conservative cheering section seemed to be a mere subset of a friendly media. Giuliani is not, however, the darling of the *New York Times* and those who follow its lead. Far from it.

The expansion of the number and diversity of conservative media outlets may have made it easier for opinion journalists to see themselves as activists, and then, in some cases, as campaign workers. Thanks to blogging, anyone can be a journalist; and boundaries are fuzzy along the continuum from the campaigns' blogs to blogs set up by the candidates' supporters to sites that aren't affiliated with any candidate. (They'll all link to one another indiscriminately.) Perhaps during the next election cycle, Republican candidates will actively recruit writers at the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, RedState.com, and NR.

That conservative writers are increasingly identifying with particular candidates may be an inevitable development. But it brings with it a temptation to boosterism. The moment an opinion journalist says to himself, "This is my guy"—as opposed to some cooler assessment, such as "Given the alternatives and on balance, I prefer this guy"—he increases that temptation tenfold. He may soon find himself yielding to it, if only subconsciously.

As a group, the Rudy pundits have been noteworthy not only for their praise of Giuliani's finer qualities but for their silence on, or outright denial of, his drawbacks. The pundits who have tried to make the case that social conservatives should support Giuliani, for example, have not argued that his candidacy offers more advantages than disadvantages, or even that they should care less about social issues. Instead, they have mostly tried to claim, implausibly, that social conservatives are not giving up anything or taking any risks by supporting him. Jennifer Rubin has written that those social conservatives who support Giuliani are evidence of their movement's growing maturity. (The majority of social conservatives who do not support him are, I take it, still immature.)

Murdock has written eleven pro-Rudy columns this year. No doubt he would say that his enthusiasm for Giuliani is justified. Even if so, it has distorted his judgment. In February, he wrote a blistering piece on Mitt Romney's flip-flops. Giuliani is in close second place as the candidate who has switched positions on the most issues, including several of the issues that Murdock mentioned in his column. Murdock hasn't written a word of criticism of any of those flip-flops.

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The Rudy pundits' rooting interest is coloring even some of their horse-race journalism. If a political development is unfavorable to Giuliani, many of them dismiss it. Is Giuliani sinking in New Hampshire? Then that primary doesn't matter anymore. In recent weeks, the Rudy pundits have alternated between insisting that evangelical voters will too vote for their guy, and warning that if evangelicals do not vote for him they will be responsible for electing Hillary Clinton. (Note the excluded possibilities: that it will be Giuliani's fault for alienating natural Republicans, or the pundits' fault for dismissing this danger.)

Rooting too heavily for a candidate can be self-defeating. The less detached a pundit, the less persuasive his advocacy. There is a precedent for backfiring commentary. In 2000, the scribblers behind McCain helped to define his candidacy as an attack on the conservative movement and the Republican establishment, which responded by joining forces to crush him. McCain won the pundit primary, but he lost the nomination. **NR**

■ 2008 II

Voting and The Single Woman

The raw demographic truth in American politics

KATE O'BEIRNE

HILLARY CLINTON's relationship with male voters puts her in solidarity with every woman whose efforts to woo have ended in the unwelcome recognition "He's just not that into you." She is also unlikely to fare well with married women, who are reliably Republican voters. But that's no reason Hillary can't win the presidency. She will seek support from single female voters—and there are enough of them to deliver the White House.

White men abandoned the Democratic party long before Hillary came along to remind them of their sixth-grade hall monitor. Democrats haven't won more than 43 percent of the white-male vote in 30 years. Al Gore carried only 36 percent of white male voters, and John Kerry only 37 percent. If no women had voted on Election Day 2000, George Bush and Dick Cheney would have carried 43 states.

But women are not the monolithic bloc of feminist fantasy, and not all women voters are a sure bet for Democrats. John Kerry won the women's vote by 3 points, but lost white women by 11 points and married women without college degrees by 16 points. Since 1980, white women voters have supported Republican presidential candidates by an average of eight points (54 to 46).

Single female voters can expect to be the most popular girls this election season. A recent study by Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg explains why. Greenberg looked at the marriage gap—that is, the margin of married voters to unmarried ones who favor a given candi-

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date, party, or position—and found it to be a powerful predictor of voting behavior. The marriage gap is far larger than the much-discussed gender gap. In the 2006 congressional elections, the marriage gap was a huge 32 points, compared with a gender gap of just 9 points. Among women voters, the marriage gap was even larger—36 points. And the marriage gap seems to cut across traditional voting blocs. (In 2006 there was a 14-point marriage gap among black voters.)

What this means is that single women tend to vote like other single women, regardless of age, income, or education. And single women tend to vote Democratic. They constitute more than a quarter of the voting population, and they are "easily the largest segment of the Democratic base—bigger than Hispanics and African Americans combined," Greenberg writes.

The good news for Democrats is that marriage rates are on the decline. Greenberg points out in his study that, from 1960 to 2006, the unmarried voting-age population grew from 27 to 45 percent of the electorate. He explains, "Between the 2002 and 2006 elections, the growth rate of unmarried Americans was double that of married Americans. If this trend continues, the unmarried will be a majority of the population within 15 years." And now, for the first time ever, the number of married Americans aged 21–54 is dropping in absolute terms.

Fortunately for Republicans, single women aren't married to the notion that it's important to vote. In 2004, 20 million single women, or 41 percent, stayed home on Election Day. In contrast with their single sisters, just 29 percent of married women didn't vote.

But the single women who did show up preferred John Kerry to George Bush by 25 points. It's reasonable to expect that single women will favor Democrats in 2008 as well, given their present attitudes. They are more pessimistic about the direction of the country, and hold a less favorable judgment of President Bush, than the population at large. They say, by a margin of 46 percent, that they prefer their next president to be a Democrat. In a match-up between Hillary Clinton and Rudy Giuliani, they favor Hillary by 36 points.

Greenberg notes the "insecure economic realities most unmarried women face" and finds that their priorities differ from those of other voters. They are more interested in health care, the economy, and entitlement programs, and less interested in terrorism, immigration, taxes, and spending.

When single women do express preferences on foreign policy, they once again differ from married women. By a whopping 71–22 margin, single women believe the war in Iraq has made us less safe. Greenberg writes that the population as a whole, by contrast, "is evenly split on this question and, by a slight margin (44–47), married women actually think the war has made us more secure—this represents a 51-point marriage gap among women."

In 2004, Democrats recognized that single women were the largest bloc of nonvoters in the country and tried to boost their turnout by calling in the big guns. Sharon Stone stumped with candidates, reminding women, "We're not a minority anymore," while Jennifer Aniston asked in a TV ad: "Would you let someone else choose your clothes? Your friends? Okay. What about your husband? No? Then why would you let someone else choose your president?" Sarah Jessica Parker, Meg Ryan, and Barbra Streisand recorded phone messages that were targeted at single women in battleground states.

In the end, President Bush's ability to turn out 3.5 million more white evangelical voters in 2004 than in 2000 swamped the modest increase in the number of unmarried women at the polls. But Democrats will spare no effort to keep something similar from happening in 2008. And, if Greenberg is right, their task won't be too hard. His study cites data indicating that "unmarried women could improve their participation in 2008 to record levels." In eleven battleground states, 64 percent of single women voters who are registered to vote but missed at least one of the last two presidential elections now say they are "absolutely certain" to vote next year.

So the challenge for Democrats is to motivate the historically unmotivated before Election Day. Republicans, meanwhile, should consider the demographics, recognize them as a long-term challenge, and remember that being pro-marriage is both good policy and good politics. **NR**

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■ 2008 III

The Un-Inevitability Of Hillary Clinton

Before we become resigned to her . . .

JONAH GOLDBERG

THERE's a common notion out there that members of the Vast Right Wing Conspiracy—or whatever you want to call us—are in it for the money. We conservatives must secretly know we're wrong, because otherwise we wouldn't be liars; and the only plausible motive for lying is that we're getting checks from our paymasters to oppose the forces of Truth and Light.

Barely a week goes by where a left-wing reader doesn't matter-of-factly inform me that he or she "knows" Halliburton pays me to say the minimum wage is bad, global warming doesn't exist, and—most relevantly—Hillary Clinton is something less than a national savior.

I bring this up because it introduces the great irony of this election year. When fundraising for NATIONAL REVIEW, Rich Lowry likes to point out that NR's commitment to capitalism is entirely notional, since we rely on the kindness of strangers—and friends—to keep us afloat. Something similar is at work when it comes to conservative efforts to stop Hillary. If we were motivated by filthy lucre, we might talk a big anti-Hillary game, but at night the editors of NR would be sitting on a couch in the publisher's office eating nachos, drinking beer, and waving giant "Hillary's #1" foam fingers at the Democratic debates while shouting, "You go, girl!"

In the 1990s, The Bill Clinton Show drove the numbers for conservative magazines, books, and radio programs through the roof. Under George W. Bush, however, *The Nation*'s circulation has skyrocketed, and Keith Olbermann's ratings are high enough that MSNBC has decided to double down and become a left-wing version of Fox News.

My point is this: Whatever the fringe benefits may be of standing athwart Hillary, yelling Stop, it's the right thing to do.

There is no reason to believe that Hillary would govern as a centrist. Her centrism since 2000 has been necessary for her to become president, and she will do whatever it takes to become president. She is her husband's wife, after all. When Hillary did not have her eyes on the prize, her entire career was dedicated to pushing the leftmost position politically possible. She sided, as best she could, with the leftists within the Clinton administration on everything from health care to welfare reform. Her book *It Takes a Village* is close to soccer-mom socialism (if you disagree, read it). Prior to her stint as First Lady, she was nothing if not a committed left-wing activist.

And yet, Hillary has recently been enjoying something like a Strange New Respect from conservatives. One possible explanation is that she's been able to start her general-election sprint to the center even before she gets the nomination. She often sounds like a centrist fighting off a bunch of left-leaning marionettes dancing on the "netroots" string. As a result many conservatives, myself included, have found ourselves admiring her skills and her tenacity. Rich Lowry wrote a column hailing her "brilliant politics." William Kristol said last summer that "Obama is becoming the anti-war candidate, and Hillary Clinton is becoming the responsible Democrat who could become commander in chief in a post-9/11 world."

Surveying this transformation, Bruce Bartlett wrote in the L.A. *Times* last August: "At least a few conservative opinion makers are ratcheting downward their level of resistance. They are coming to terms with the growing likelihood that she will be our next president and concluding that maybe it is something they can live with."

This is almost surely overstated, but it's an overstated truth. And it must be overturned by reviving the conventional wisdom of just a year ago: Hillary would make a terrible nominee. If this point could be clarified, Hillary wouldn't stand much of a chance of getting the nomination.

Democratic primary voters tend to support the person who's perceived to be the most likely general-election winner. Hence the trick for Hillary's Democratic opponents is to dispel the auras of inevitability and electability by proving that the former doesn't yield the latter. Unfortunately for them, they've been doing a terrible job at that. Fortunately for them, Clinton herself has been helping out a bit. In her now-infamous Philadelphia debate performance, she helped pierce her invulnerability with her inkblot answer on driver's licenses for illegal immigrants and the ham-fisted way the campaign reacted to criticism. Even a few drops of blood from her self-inflicted wound were enough blood to launch a feeding frenzy.

While Hillary has a huge lead in national polls, it's telling that she cannot decisively break out from the pack in Iowa. Her basic problem is that she is not very likeable: Except for some diehard Clintonophiles and feminists, the base of the party is simply not that into her. If you talk to liberals off the record you get a distinct she's-John-Kerry-all-over-again vibe. Her campaign theme song should be Stephen Stills's "Love the One You're With"—as in, "If you can't be with the one you love, honey, love the one you're with."

The problem for Obama and Edwards is that they feel they can't directly attack Hillary's electability; accordingly, they spend most of their time attacking the reasons she may not be electable rather than arguing she isn't electable. So Edwards and Obama routinely refer to Clintonian triangulation, "parsing," the shady fundraising ethics. But caucusgoers, by and large, don't much care about that stuff on the merits: If Bill could run for a third term, they would nominate him in a heartbeat. What they do care about is winning. Poke a hole in that notion and Democrats will be free to vote with their hearts instead of their heads.

There are at least three reasons Hillary could be a bad pick for the Democrats. First, presidential elections tend to be won by the more likeable candidate—and Hillary is a lugubrious robot. Bill is an oleaginous carny, who, like her, dissembles with breathless abandon. But while Hillary has the lyrics down, she can't hear the music. Bill is like a jazz impresario of deceit, always in the

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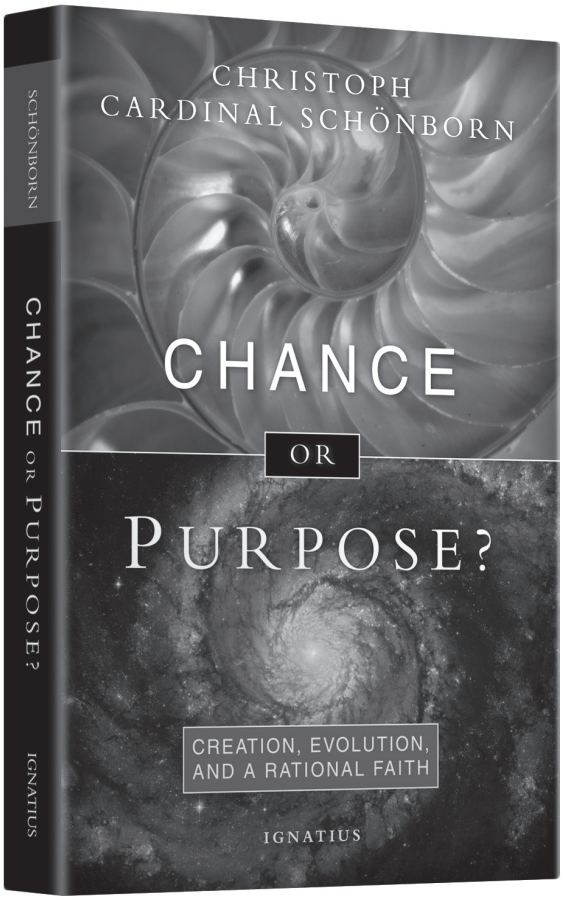

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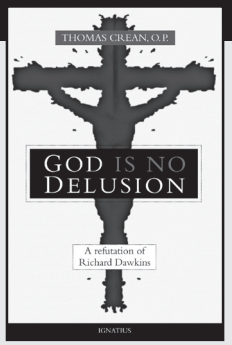

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groove. Following Hillary as she constructs, brick by brick, one of her word bunkers feels like homework.

Second, this is a "change election." Government is more unpopular than it was during Watergate and the Democratic Congress has lower approval ratings than President Bush. Pollster Bill McInturff claims that "this is the most angry and unstable of an electorate as I've seen in my career." Referenda in New Jersey (funding stem cells), Utah (funding school choice), and Oregon (funding children's health care) all failed this November. The common denominator seems to be a general animosity to governmental ambition.

And while everyone is focusing on the fact that the Democrats are running against Bush and the war, fewer people have noted that they're also running for expanding government. Bush won't be on the ballot next year and the war may improve (the fact that Hollywood's slew of anti-war films have fizzled may be a sign that the public is both anti-war and anti-anti-war). Meanwhile, the Democratic Congress is likely to continue to flounder. An anti-Bush message may well get trumped by an anti-Washington message. And any of the Republican frontrunners is a more plausible anti-Washington messenger than Clinton is. After all, she's running as the quintessential Washington hand, a veteran of the White House and a Senate agenda-setter. Clinton says she has a "million ideas" but the country just can't pay for them all right now. True enough. But having a million new ideas taxpayers can't afford may not be something to brag about if current trends continue.

Third and finally, Hillary is . . . a Clinton. The 1990s may have been a nice time for America, but not everybody thinks Bill deserves the credit for it, and some people do want to turn the page. More important, while moderates, independents, and other swing voters may loathe Clinton-haters, they also loathe Clinton hatred. The prospect of spending another four—or eight—years listening to anti-Clinton attacks, having just finished eight years of anti-Bush attacks and eight years of anti-Clinton attacks before that, may just be too much for the "can't we all get along" do-gooders who tend to decide elections.

So keep up the good fight, conservatives. It will turn off all the right people. **NR**

ROMAN GENN

■ CAPITOL HILL

Republican From Michigan

Dave Camp is a quiet but effective congressman

JOHN J. MILLER

A coat rack stands in the corner of Rep. Dave Camp's office on Capitol Hill. It looks like a weeping-willow tree, drooping with ties instead of branches and leaves. Dozens of them hang from it, and the Michigan Republican probably won't ever put them away. "When I was first elected to Congress in 1990, a newspaper writer learned that I only owned two suits and three ties—so he wrote a column and told people to send me their ties," says Camp. They did, and for a while every day was Father's Day in Camp's office, with guests bearing ties for the new congressman. Recalling this experience, which has more or less ceased due to new congressional rules on gifts, Camp jumps up from his seat and digs into the heap, showing off some of his favorites. Down deep, he finds one featuring Iron Man, the comic-book hero. Others display the logos of colleges and universities. He looks for his Adam Smith tie but can't locate it. "Maybe it's somewhere else," he says.

Today, Camp owns a full wardrobe of suits and ties. He not only fits into Washington, he positively blends in, to the point of near obscurity. "He's one of our hardest-working members, but a little below the radar," says a Republican aide. "He's not a publicity hound."

Yet this quiet conservative now finds himself on the brink of public prominence. He's one of the top Republicans on the Committee on Ways & Means, which is perhaps the most powerful body in the House, because it has jurisdiction over taxes, trade, and entitlements. If Congress flips back to GOP control within the next few election cycles, Camp is well positioned to become its chairman. For the moment, though, he's the ranking member on its subcommittee on health, a position that makes him a point man among House Republicans on the domestic issue that may concern voters above all others. Any conservative plan to reform health care—or perhaps to defeat HillaryCare—is sure to show Camp's imprint.

The 54-year-old Camp comes from one of the larger congressional districts east of the Mississippi: It takes up a rural chunk of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, stretching from the outskirts of Saginaw to Traverse City. This is Republican country, where GOP presidential candidates finish 10 points ahead of Democrats and Camp earns support from about two-thirds of voters. The district includes the tiny town of Mecosta, where the conservative intellectual Russell Kirk once lived. When Camp first ran for Congress, he faced a difficult GOP primary against a candidate whom many Republicans viewed as the more rightward choice. Yet Camp met with Kirk and won his endorsement. "He's an instinctive conservative and a straight arrow," says Kirk's widow, Annette, who

Rep. Dave Camp (R., Mich.)

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remains a constituent. Camp will probably keep his seat for as long as he wants it.

During the 1990s, Camp's district didn't even have a local television station in it, which may be one reason the congressman doesn't appear on the tube much—he never got into the habit of chasing cameras. Today, he's on a bit more, but he tends to let other Republicans have the face time. "My press secretary might say that I avoid television, but I don't really dislike it or anything," says Camp. "I just don't really worry about who gets credit as long as we end up with good policy." His low-key approach makes him inconspicuous to the general public but endears him to many colleagues, who often find themselves surrounded by grandstanders who can spot microphones at a distance the way hawks see mice from above.

These qualities have made Camp an effective organizer who speaks softly and carries a big whip—he's a deputy whip in the House GOP's party structure, responsible for corralling votes on legislation. "We always gave him a tough card," says a former leadership aide, referring to the list of members Camp was responsible for contacting. "He's a good listener and he's able to engage members on the details of policy." Most recently, Camp helped round up the votes to sustain President Bush's veto of a proposed expansion to the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Although Camp's voting record is conservative—his lifetime score with the American Conservative Union is almost 89 percent—he can perform balancing acts and steers clear of factionalism. He's a rarity, a congressman who is a member of both the Main Street Partnership and the Republican Study Committee—associations within the House GOP that organize liberals and conservatives, respectively. He isn't especially active in either group, though he says he's "more at home in the RSC." This is certainly reflected in his positions on stem-cell research (as a prolifer, he's against the kind that results in human-embryo destruction) and a marriage amendment to the Constitution (which he supports). Nor is he averse to bending conservative principles. On November 6, he decided to go with the flow and vote to override Bush's veto of a water-projects spending bill. This put him on the side of most House Republicans, though not of most conservatives.

Camp isn't squarely in anybody's camp, and the ability to work with different kinds of Republicans is the kind of trait that can propel House members to top leadership positions, though Camp insists that he's content to stay put on Ways & Means. Such versatility also helped Camp three years ago when Electrolux, a refrigerator company, announced a plan to shutter a factory in Greenville, Mich., and move to Mexico. Given the Wolverine State's crummy economy, Camp's longstanding support for free trade probably wasn't what a lot of locals were hoping to find in their congressman. Camp rushed to the town anyway, armed with five-page handouts full of charts and graphs. The main one displayed unemployment rates in Michigan and Montcalm County over the last three decades—and revealed that joblessness in both places has dropped since the enactment of NAFTA.

It's an effective presentation not only because the data are compelling but also because Camp is at least as much an earnest wonk as he is a baby-kissing politician. Asked about pending free-trade agreements, including one with Panama, he mentions that he's reading the Edmund Morris biography of Theodore Roosevelt and discusses the history of canal construction. He also pores over the proposals of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a free-market think tank that focuses on Michigan. "When I see him at the airport in Saginaw, he often pulls one of our reports out of his bag to show me that he's reading it," says Larry Reed of the center.

Camp says he preferred it when Republicans were in the majority, but he also finds the minority experience invigorating. "It's a more challenging place intellectually, and a time to focus on the power of ideas," he says. "If Republicans are ever going to come back, we're going to need more than a feeling of buyer's remorse among voters—we'll need a strong alternative agenda."

It will have to include health care, of course, and Camp is currently drafting legislation that he believes will offer a comprehensive, conservative approach to the issue. He won't introduce it before February, but he has high hopes: "My bill will be like an anthology of the best ideas offered by other members plus a few of my own." He describes its major parts: tax changes that will loosen the link between jobs and health care, medical savings accounts, the ability to purchase insurance across state lines, preventive care through information technology, and tort reform. He supports Mitt Romney for president—he even recalls attending GOP events in Michigan with George Romney, the former governor who was Mitt's father—but he's cautious about the mandates in Romney's health plan for Massachusetts. "That might have been the correct approach for his state, which doesn't have a large sector of small businesses. It wouldn't work nationally."

From a federal level, Camp prefers a metaphor: "The government built the interstate highways and it polices them, but drivers can pick which cars they want to drive and where they want to go. That's how our health-care system should work, too."

It remains to be seen whether Camp can sell this concept to his colleagues, let alone the nation. But at least he can try it wearing his Adam Smith tie: "I found it in my closet, at home." **NR**

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Is it sound policy to jail expectant mothers for substance abuse and take away their babies?

"Many professional health care and child welfare organizations have banded together against criminalization on the basis that it is antithetical to the best interests of both the mother and the child."

"… criminalization has no proven effect on improving infant health or deterring substance abuse by pregnant women."

"In fact, criminalization may deter the pregnant woman from seeking out necessary prenatal care for fear of losing their children or being arrested."

"A drug-exposed infant should be removed from the custody of his/her parent(s) only if the parent(s) are unable to protect and care for the infant and either support services are not sufficient to manage this risk, or the parent(s) have refused such services."*

If removal is good policy, shouldn't we also place infants in foster care if the mother smokes, imbibes or is obese? We could build orphanages as well as prisons!

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* *Substance Use During Pregnancy: Time for Policy to Catch Up with Research*, by Barry M. Lester, PhD, Lynne Andreozzi, and Lindsey Appiah, published April 20, 2004. www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/1/1/5

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■ THE WORLD

Understanding Pakistan

Some myths and realities about an explosive nation

JONATHAN FOREMAN

THERE are no simple answers to the dilemmas presented by Pakistan and its president.

Of course, Pervez Musharraf's state of emergency is nothing like the terrifying authoritarian scourge painted by some of the Western media. If it were, he would not have allowed the English-language press to continue publishing, or Benazir Bhutto to make speeches to admiring Western media folk. (As one experienced aid-agency worker e-mailed me, "It's not like in the days of Zia, when journalists shook in their shoes.") Nor would Benazir have initially refrained from calling out her political party—an organization accustomed to political violence—onto the streets. There is little sign of genuine popular anger in Pakistan, because the state of emergency barely touches the lives of ordinary people.

On the other hand, Musharraf's roundups and media shutdowns clearly have much more to do with the preservation of his power and political viability than with Pakistan's battles against Islamist terrorism and tribal insurgency. Though one influential Islamist general has been arrested, Musharraf has so far demonstrated no greater willingness or ability to suppress Islamist parties, rescue educational and religious institutions from the extremists' grip, or crush tribal uprisings on the frontier. The targets of the emergency are instead the people who would be the kernel of civil society in Pakistan if it were a better functioning society.

Nevertheless, and you wouldn't know it from the media coverage, Musharraf remains the least unpopular political figure in the country. The expanding middle class—which has benefited from healthy economic growth during much of his rule—apparently has little faith in what is hyperbolically called "Pakistani democracy" but is really a form of elective feudalism. Unlike foreign correspondents, whose prime interlocutors are from the tiny political class, members of the middle class remember the fantastical incompetence and corruption of the Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto civilian governments. It's telling that the only sign of public anger has come from a section of Pakistan's English-speaking elite: the country's 80,000-odd lawyers.

It may be that Musharraf cannot survive without the consent of the elements he has alienated, and that he should hold elections to regain that consent. But nobody should be under the illusion that elections are a panacea in Pakistan or that their results necessarily reflect the popular will. In a country where feudal landlords can and do use private armies to coerce their tenants to vote for their cousin Benazir or their pal Nawaz, elections often take on a grimly farcical quality.

Moreover, the things that Musharraf or any leader must do if Pakistan is to remain even relatively stable and whole are things that no civilian or military government has been able to do. It's worth remembering that, like Musharraf and Sharif, Bhutto did nothing to improve access to education—which remains out of reach to most of the country's millions, except in the form of unregulated and increasingly radical madrassas. (Benazir did less for women's rights than Musharraf.) And even though the country's cold war with India costs it billions and has created disastrous terrorist blowback, no major Pakistani politician with the partial exception of Musharraf has had the courage to fight for a lasting peace deal.

Pervez Musharraf

ROMAN GENN

Each day brings another development that could potentially plunge the country into chaos, or bring it back from the brink. At the time of writing, Benazir Bhutto seems intent on upsetting the careful balance she and President Musharraf have struck since his declaration of emergency rule by leading a march banned by the government. Until now Benazir's gestures have been limited and carefully weighed, almost as if pre-agreed with the president, who at first limited her house arrest to a day. If she does embark on a course of confrontation, it could transform what has so far been a squabble within Pakistan's ruling elite into something far more significant and dangerous. In the meantime, perhaps the most useful thing a Pakistan-watcher can do is explain some of the realities that the mainstream-media coverage tends to miss or ignore.

Foreign Influence. It isn't clear that the United States has any leverage it can safely use to push Musharraf into holding a relatively fair election early next year. Musharraf's priority is his own political survival, not U.S. subsidies. He demonstrated this by launching his latest "coup" while a top Bush official was still in Pakistan.

On the other hand, there is another country that has as much, if not more, influence in Pakistan than the U.S. does: China. It is to China that the Pakistani military turned after being "ditched," to use Musharraf's term, by the U.S. Not only has China long been the country's primary arms supplier, it is also investing billions in a new deep-sea Pakistani port at Gwadar—a port that is set to be China's naval outpost in the Indian Ocean.

When China talks, Musharraf and the Pakistani military listen. This was made clear in the summer when Musharraf

Mr. Foreman is a journalist living in London.

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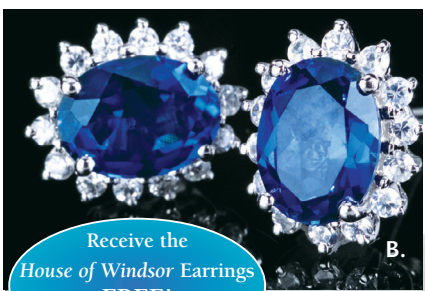

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finally sent troops against the Lal Masjid, the jihadist mosque in Islamabad that had been seized by armed militants six months before. The spur to military action was the kidnapping of six Chinese girls from a massage parlor. Similarly, when Chinese workers in the province of Balochistan were abducted by militants, Pakistani security forces cracked down, assassinating the Taliban leader Abdullah Mahsud, who had long used Pakistan as a base for attacks on Coalition forces in Afghanistan.

The lawyers' movement. The shocking news photographs of middle-aged men in dark suits being beaten up by club-wielding police have become the defining image of Musharraf's coup against his own constitution. Accordingly the "lawyers' movement" has received a great deal of sympathetic coverage abroad, but little that accurately reflects the position of lawyers in Pakistani society. The legal profession in Pakistan is not like the legal profession in the U.S. or the U.K., and not simply because the Pakistani bar has demonstrated such impressive physical courage. In Pakistan, as in India, what the police are to the poor and working class—a branch of government that offers small salaries but tremendous opportunities for enrichment through graft and extortion—the legal profession is to the middle class. Cases often take decades to be resolved. In the courts, corruption is too often the norm rather than the exception. Even compared to their cousins in the U.S., lawyers are not popular, and their battles with the Musharraf regime have won for them little public sympathy. There are many decent and brave barristers who genuinely fight for their clients or for women's rights or human rights—many of them have been put under some form of arrest—but they are a minority.

Iftikhar Chaudhry, the chief justice whose imminent ruling on Musharraf's eligibility for election apparently prompted the emergency, is a rather more complex figure than much of the coverage would suggest. His call for an uprising against Musharraf is irresponsible and self-indulgent even by the standards of a professional class that knows little and understands less about the real Pakistan. But then Chaudhry had already demonstrated his insulated foolishness by ordering the reopening of the Lal Masjid mosque and its handover to pro-Taliban militants.

The army. Though Musharraf is a "soldier's soldier" and has been hugely popular for most of his career, it is not clear how long he would continue to retain the backing of his fellow generals if Benazir were to provoke street violence. Army morale is said to have been weakened by failures in the counterinsurgency operations in the frontier tribal areas, where there have been large-scale desertions and surrenders.

Moreover, there may be limits to the army's overall cohesion in the event of a deepening crisis. The army, like Pakistan itself, is dominated by Punjabis—but it also includes large numbers of Pashtuns. Some are recruited from the tribal areas on the Afghan frontier and there are reports that some of them have become alienated by counterinsurgency opera-

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tions there. The suicide bomber who detonated himself at the Tarbela Ghazi base of the elite Special Services Group on September 13 is said to have been a Pashtun major who wanted to avenge the death of a relative.

Militant groups are naturally doing their best to exploit ethnic and sectarian divisions within the security forces. Indeed, one interesting detail of recent violence that has gone unnoticed by the Western media is its sectarian element. Tribal rebels in Waziristan and Swat, encouraged by al-Qaeda-linked militant groups, have beheaded captured Shiite members of the Pakistani Security Forces, while letting Sunni prisoners go.

But it would probably be a mistake to underestimate the strength of the Pakistani army and its generals at this point, just as it is probably premature to fear an Islamist revolution there along the Iranian model. The Pakistani state has withstood greater upheavals in the past, not least the loss of Bangladesh and two resounding military defeats. **NR**

■ THE WORLD II

Conspiracies So Immense . . .

The spooky condition of today's Russia—and yesterday's, too

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

To talk to Yuri Felshtinsky is to revisit an era meant to have ended when Boris Yeltsin leapt onto a tank in Moscow. But when Dr. Felshtinsky examines photographs of that heroic August day, he sees something else. Visible just behind the Russian leader is Alexander Korzhakov (he's the balding man in a gray suit), the bodyguard who later became chief of Yeltsin's Presidential Security Service. "KGB," notes Felshtinsky. So he had been. Something similar could have been observed in St. Petersburg. The city's mayor was a prominent opponent of the hardliners' coup—but take a closer look at shots of his entourage, and whom do you see? Vladimir Putin, that's who. "KGB," says Felshtinsky. And then he smiles.

Felshtinsky is an historian, Russian-born (but now an American citizen), a graduate of Brandeis, a Ph.D. from Rutgers, and connecting the dots is what historians do. But the animated, intense, and likeable Dr. Felshtinsky doesn't just enjoy his connections and his dots, he treasures them, and when they begin to reveal the outline of something hidden, something mysterious, something denied, ah well . . .

He is quick to regale me with fascinating tales of murder, attempted murder, and conspiracy from the Soviet epoch, tales that have, shall we say, passed most

Mr. Stuttaford is a contributing editor of National Review Online.

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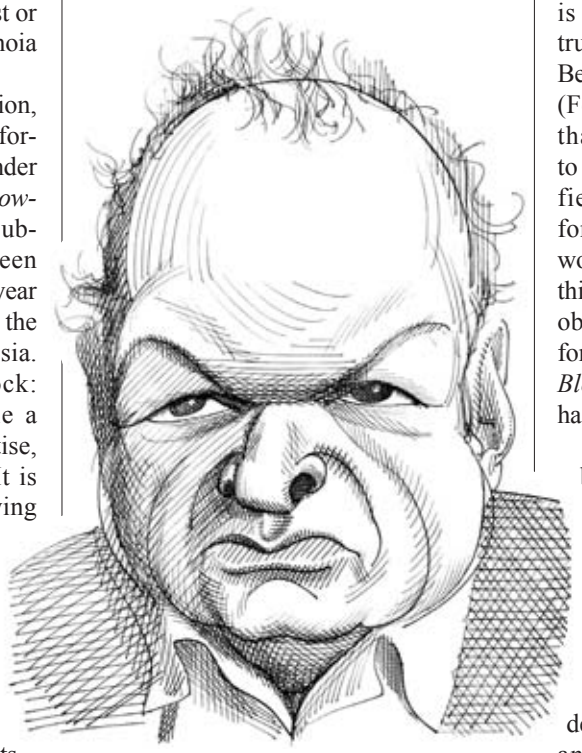
history books by. But before dismissing them all as fantasy, bear in mind that *konspiratsia* has been a malign feature of Russian politics since the czar's Okhrana began its elaborate games of deception with the revolutionaries over a century ago. These were games that, in essence, continued, unchanged but for the players, into Soviet times, and if Yuri Felshtinsky is to be believed, they still do. And maybe he should be. In Russia it's only cranks that have faith in lone gunmen. In a nation with no agreed narrative of past or present, who is to judge where paranoia ends and history begins?

This place of shadows, contradiction, and lies is where Felshtinsky and a former intelligence officer named Alexander Litvinenko researched their book, *Blowing Up Russia*. Since it was first published in 2002, Litvinenko has been murdered—poisoned in London last year with radioactive polonium-210—and the book itself has been banned in Russia. The latter can't have been a shock: *Blowing Up Russia* may resemble a somewhat discursive academic treatise, but it is as disturbing as it is dry. It is either a monstrous libel or a horrifying revelation. Neither would be acceptable to the Kremlin.

That's because the book revolves around the allegation that the devastating bombings in Moscow, Buinaksk, and Volgodonsk in September 1999 were the work not, as is usually assumed, of Chechen terrorists, but of elements within the FSB, the principal successor organization to the KGB. The bombings were, it is claimed, what the Soviets would once have called a "provocation"—a provocation of which, Felshtinsky tells me, choosing his words delicately, Putin was "aware." According to this thesis, they were designed to provide a justification for a fresh attack on Chechnya and, with that renewed war, a political climate that would favor the election to the presidency of Putin, who had recently quit his job as head of the FSB to become prime minister and Yeltsin's latest presumed successor. If that was indeed the plan, it worked. Russian troops reentered Chechnya in force, Yeltsin resigned in December, and in March 2000 Putin swept into the presidency.

Putin has described such allegations as "madness." Even to consider them is "immoral," an argument with some resonance, especially after the emergence of "Truthers" and other conspiracy theorists intent on proving what "really" happened on 9/11. Making matters muddier still, Litvinenko subsequently ruined his own credibility with a series of increasingly far-fetched tales of Putin's wrongdoing. Felshtinsky explains this by describing his co-author as an "extremist," a man on a mission, more interested in discrediting



Yuri Felshtinsky

Putin than in the truth of the stories he was peddling.

Felshtinsky had doubts about Litvinenko from early on. For all the cooperation between the two men (including Felshtinsky's role in Litvinenko's escape from Russia), he leaves the clear impression that they were never particularly close: "We were not friends." Litvinenko was former KGB/FSB: Such people, asserts Felshtinsky, can never be trusted. Felshtinsky was, he says, insistent that Litvinenko's contributions to *Blowing Up Russia* were carefully checked and, where possible, backed up by documentation. He was "professionally tough" with Litvinenko: "I am a historian."

But he's been more than that. In 1998, he recounts, he returned to his native country to "somehow move . . . myself from history to politics." That led him to Boris Berezovsky (then the leading oligarch, then still in Russia, and then thought by many to be *the* power in the land), and, through him, to Litvinenko. Felshtinsky now reckons that Berezovsky's power was, in no small part, illusion ("a legend"), that it was really only effective when exercised on behalf of those in charge of the state. That argument may well be an exaggeration, and its logic is more than a touch circular, but it is true that it didn't take too long before Berezovsky, an early supporter of Putin (Felshtinsky questions how important that support really was), was forced to flee. This left him as one of Putin's fiercest—and with his billions, most formidable—opponents. Spreading the word that Putin, or his allies, had something to do with the 1999 bombings was obviously in his interest, and so, therefore, was backing the project that became *Blowing Up Russia*. And that is what he has done.

Litvinenko was financially supported by Berezovsky for a number of years, something that, Felshtinsky says, ended only shortly before his murder. As for his own past and present arrangements with Berezovsky, Felshtinsky is reluctant to discuss them in much detail. There is, however, a vague, and vaguely patronizing, description included by Alex Goldfarb, another Berezovsky acolyte, in his account (co-written with Litvinenko's widow) of this saga: "In the late 1990s [Felshtinsky] became a peripheral planet in Boris' solar system, orbiting once every few months, advising him on various matters."

The Berezovsky camp may have been busy throwing mud at the Kremlin, but the Russian authorities have hit back hard. They have accused the oligarch, a man with a record murky even by the standards of the Yeltsin years, of involvement with Chechen terrorism (he denies the charge), and many other crimes. Allegations have also surfaced that it was *Berezovsky* who was responsible for arranging Litvinenko's death in order to embarrass Putin. If there ever has been an example of *konspiratsia* too baroque to be believed, this is it. That doesn't alter the awkward fact, a gift to the obses-

ROMAN GENN

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sive, that Andrei Lugovoy, the former KGB/FSB operative now charged by the British with Litvinenko's murder, once worked in a senior role for Berezovsky and continued to have some degree of access to him even into 2006.

None of these issues, however, nor the questions they raise, is enough in itself to discredit *Blowing Up Russia*. Its authors make a strong case (albeit one for the prosecution) and they were (and are) not alone in their suspicions. The fates of three prominent individuals who had come to very similar conclusions are, to say the least, suggestive. There was Sergei Yushenkov, an MP for the Berezovsky-backed Liberal Russia party. He called for an investigation into what happened in that summer of 1999. He was gunned down in 2003. Not long afterward, the journalist and opposition MP Yuri Shchekochikhin, who had arranged for extracts from *Blowing Up Russia* to be published in *Novaya Gazeta*, one of Russia's last remaining independent newspapers, died of an "allergic reaction." In early 2004, presidential candidate Ivan Rybkin described the bombings as a "crime committed by the security agencies." He later withdrew from the race after having been poisoned (it appears) by psychotropic drugs.

Felshtinsky regards both the Litvinenko murder and the September bombings as evidence of a wider trend: What counts in Russia now is what the FSB wants. In Soviet times, the security services were powerful, but those who ran them were creatures of the state they policed. Everything they had (in reality rarely that much) could be taken from them on a bureaucratic whim. By contrast, the new Russia offers them the chance of becoming, and staying, rich. It's a chance they have taken. In Felshtinsky's opinion, Russia has been reduced to little more than a corporate asset, and the shareholders in the corporation that controls it are, primarily, past and present members of the security services.

It's a corporation where the shareholders will, Felshtinsky believes, feel (and be) threatened if any one of their number becomes *too* powerful. Thus, he thinks that Putin will soon be made to give up much of his authority. That's an assumption that is likely to be severely battered in the next month or so. Felshtinsky is, I suspect, on more secure ground in claiming that this is a corporation with a very low degree of tolerance for any disloyalty. Alexander Litvinenko, former KGB, former FSB, not only quit the team (basically, argues Felshtinsky, as a result of a power play that backfired), but also joined up with the other side. According to Felshtinsky the consequences were inevitable. Only the polonium was a surprise.

If Felshtinsky is right, Russia's democracy is dying. That he even could be shows how sick it already is. **NR**

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Cut from the Same Cloth

Jimmy Carter in the '76 campaign, Barack Obama in this one

RICHARD LOWRY

BARACK OBAMA comes from a long line of thoughtful, achingly idealistic reformers in Democratic presidential politics. They inspire people, impress everyone with their resplendent good intentions, eschew rough-and-tumble politics as usual—and lose.

In a *Los Angeles Times* column, Ronald Brownstein traces the archetype from Eugene McCarthy in 1968 to Gary Hart in 1984 to Bill Bradley in 2000. He writes, "Since the 1960's, Democratic nominating contests regularly have come down to a struggle between a candidate who draws support primarily from upscale, economically comfortable voters liberal on social and foreign policy issues, and a rival who relies mostly on downscale, financially strained voters drawn to populist economics and somewhat more conservative views on cultural and national security issues." Obama fits the losing pattern so exactly he should be tempted to abandon all hope—audacious or not—right now.

And yet, there's a counterexample of this kind of reformer prevailing in which Obama can take some comfort—one James Earl Carter Jr.

Carter wasn't really in the McCarthy-Hart-Bradley mold. He ran a conservative, or at least an ideologically indistinct, race in the 1976 Democratic primaries. He was cagey about his abortion views, but basically pro-life; relatively conservative on economics; and somewhat supportive of right-to-work laws. (As all the qualifiers suggest, he was hard to pin down on anything). Liberals distrusted him just because he was a southerner. He vied for the George Wallace vote and benefited from four major candidates—Morris Udall, Birch Bayh, Fred Harris, and Sargent Shriver—dividing liberal support.

So Carter doesn't refute Brownstein's insight. Indeed, in the New Hampshire primary, he attracted blue-collar and middle-class volunteers, not the college-student activists that other Democratic candidates typically relied on. But Obama and Carter represent an uncanny thematic continuity; if you put aside ideology, the content of their campaigns is almost identical. There has been a lively competition among analysts to identify the year—1948? 1968? etc.—to which current circumstances in the War on Terror and in our politics are most analogous. Barack Obama should hope it's 1976, when the country turned to a hope-hawking political neophyte to soothe away memories of an unpopular war and fundamental doubts about the capacities and intentions of the United States government.

No historic analogy is exact, of course. Jimmy Carter, the prototypical darkhorse, began his primary campaign in 1975 in obscurity as a former one-term Georgia governor. He helped invent the Iowa caucuses as a significant step to the nomination. (So new was the national press attention there that the chairman of the Iowa Democrats charged people to watch star TV correspondents like CBS's Roger Mudd do their caucus-night reports.) Carter's team realized the potential of an Iowa strategy after he was warmly received at a retirement dinner for the Plymouth County recorder in February 1975. From then on, they considered coverage in the *Des Moines Register* more important than the *Washington Post*. Carter had an insatiable appetite for retail campaigning and sometimes would show up unannounced at people's homes. If they weren't there, he'd leave a note explaining he had dropped by.

Obama, by contrast, was shot out of a cannon of hype and publicity earlier this year. If he had attempted to leave a note on anyone's door at the inception of his campaign, he would have been swamped by star-struck admirers, and TV satellite trucks would have clogged the neighborhood.

But Carter and Obama have essential similarities. First, there is the sheer implausibility of their presidential ambitions. Carter's aides were at first embarrassed by the idea of even talking about him running for president. In his classic account of the 1976 campaign, *Marathon*, Jules Witcover twice uses the word "audacity" to describe Carter's decision to run—exactly the word Obama used to describe his own presidential ambitions in his announcement speech.

Carter at least had four years of executive experience, although he still had to stretch for presidential-seeming credentials. He talked about his work at a "nuclear power plant as a nuclear physicist" (an exaggeration) and his trade missions abroad as Georgia governor. This is just as lame and implausible as Obama's touting his work as a community organizer and law professor—a *constitutional*-law professor, he's always careful to add—as preparation for the presidency. Incredibly enough, Obama

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has cited his major in international relations at college as foreign-policy experience. Neither man, by rights, had any business launching presidential campaigns. Both men, however, are fiercely competitive strivers who know how to wear their ambitions lightly.

Prior to the 1976 race, one of Carter's aides urged him in a memo to "capitalize on your greatest asset—your personal charm." It's easy to forget, now that Carter has covered himself in the shame of so many outrageous post-presidential statements and acts, that charisma was the rocket fuel of Carter's candidacy. During TV appearances, political chronicler Theodore White writes, "his smile went on as soon as the camera's red light flashed, as if he were plugged in." He converted supporters. Witcover refers to Carter's interactions with individual voters as "personal political baptisms." Witcover recounts an event in New Hampshire with seventh- and eighth-graders that Carter ended by raising up his arms and saying, "I love all of you." The kids rose up and surrounded Carter, who began picking up and hugging them one by one. "Suffer the little children to come unto me," commented one reporter, awed by what he was seeing.

MR. SMOOTH

Personal charm is the very basis of Obama's candidacy; without it—given his lack of accomplishments, experience, and defining issues—he wouldn't be running. He's undeniably a winsome guy, smart and smooth: the coolest major politician in recent memory. His candidacy is given a special frisson of excitement because he's the first-ever black candidate who has a real chance of winning the White House. If the size of his events precludes him from having a Carter-like laying of hands on children, the press corps has swooned into his arms like those kids into Carter's. One of the strongest arguments he makes in behalf of his candidacy is essentially that he's more likable than Hillary and therefore won't engender the fierce opposition of the other side.

Carter didn't get by on charm alone. His theme of hope and change hit exactly the right notes in a post-Vietnam, post-Watergate America yearning for a fresh start. His mantra, repeated over and over again, was, "I want a government that is as good, and honest, and decent, and truthful, and fair, and competent, and idealistic, and compassionate, and as filled with love as are the American people." He would achieve it partly through his own qualities as a person and a candidate. He said in one of his commercials, "There are lots of things I would not do to be elected. Listen to me: I'll never tell a lie. I'll never make a misleading statement. I'll never betray the confidence any of you has in me."

Of course, Obama talks about hope so often he could almost trademark the word. And he speaks of change just as much, trying to tap into a public feeling of discontent running nearly as deep as when Carter ran. In his Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner speech in Iowa, Obama advocated "a party that doesn't just offer change as a slogan, but real, meaningful change—change that America can believe in," adding—in case someone didn't get the point—"that's why I am running for the Presidency of the United States of America: to offer change that we can believe in." Like Carter, Obama offers himself as the embodiment of this kind of change, the new bottle into which to pour a new politics beyond the tired baby-boomer conflicts and the acrimony of the Bush-Clinton-Bush years.

Carter in 1976 and Obama today present themselves as non-politician politicians willing to trample on political conventions. Carter aide Hamilton Jordan told Witcover the idea was "for somebody to stand up and tell the American people to do the things that were unpopular, a feeling that if politicians dealt more openly with the electorate that they would respond well." In his Jefferson-Jackson Day speech, Obama said almost exactly the same thing. There is an opportunity to bring the country together, according to Obama, "and that is why the same old Washington textbook campaign just won't do in this election. That's why not answering questions 'cause we are afraid our answers won't be popular just won't do. That's why telling the American people what we think they want to hear instead of telling the American people what they need to hear just won't do."

This all tends to run to vaporous abstraction. When the media tried to pin Carter down on issues, Witcover writes, "he dismissed the insistence on clear-cut responses by saying that reporters asked him 'frivolous' questions that the public really didn't care about." Earlier in Obama's campaign, before he saw opportunity in attacking Hillary Clinton for not being specific enough, he struck the same note. At a meeting of the

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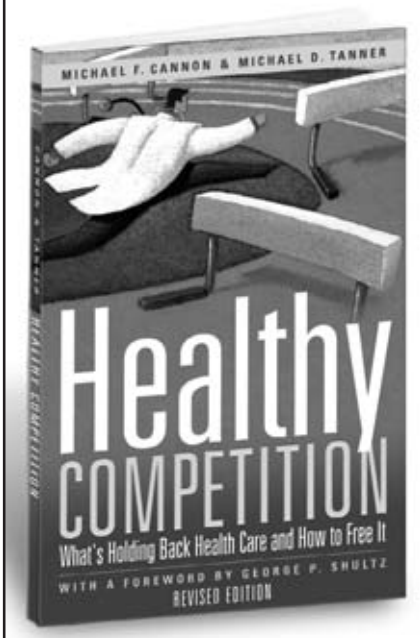
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Democratic National Committee he said, "There are those who don't believe in talking about hope. They say, 'Well, we want specifics; we want details; and we want white papers; we want plans.' We've had a lot of plans, Democrats. What we've had is a shortage of hope."

Carter tried to have a trans-ideological appeal. Witcover writes, "Why should a candidate be liberal or conservative down the line, [Carter] argued, when most of the American people were not?" Obama made much the same case in his book *The Audacity of Hope*. He has quoted Martin Luther King for the proposition, "It's not either/or, it's both/and." On *Meet the Press* recently, he rued the fact that people tend "to argue along the spectrum of you're either a hawk or a dove." He also touted his "ability to focus on getting the job done, as opposed to getting embroiled in ideological arguments."

Both Carter and Obama clothe their appeals to trans-ideological change in Christian religiosity. Jimmy Carter had what Hamilton Jordan called "a weirdo factor" because he was a born-again Christian who spoke frankly talking about his faith at a time when people weren't used to that. Carter was unabashed in talking about love—his line to those eighth-graders about loving all of them wasn't exceptional. Obama is running in an environment inured to candidates talking about their faith. But part of his appeal as a Democrat is how effortlessly he talks about religion. In his famous 2004 convention speech, he used Biblical imagery to powerful effect. He too invokes love, if not as frequently as Carter. At a church service in South Carolina, he told the congregation, "I am confident that we can create a kingdom right here on earth."

Both Carter and Obama clothe their appeals to trans-ideological change in Christian religiosity.

A MASSIVE SELF-REGARD

The danger in a candidate who runs against the political system on the basis of his ability to embody and deliver change sold in religion-infused terms is a massive self-regard. Carter demonstrated it at every turn. Witcover writes, "Carter had a distinct way of converting his every act, even a refusal to give a plain answer to a plain question, into an act of political morality. This pretension in him often rankled, but he never hesitated to invoke it if it served his purpose." Obama has the same tendency. He has been intensely focused on the ethics and processes of his own campaign and deflects criticisms of him as the old politics and the status quo biting back at him because of his unique righteousness.

Obama's attack on Hillary Clinton is instructive. She has said she wants a bipartisan commission to examine the financing of Social Security before she commits herself to anything. Obama criticizes this as unacceptable politics as usual. What's his alternative? Well, as he told Tim Russert, "I will convene a meeting as president where we discuss all of the options that are available." Obama speaks more favorably of increased payroll taxes than Hillary, but otherwise there's not much daylight between them. He nonetheless inflates this into a yawning difference of principle because if he holds a position it, ipso facto, is part of the new politics; if someone else holds it, it's the grubby politics of old. Obama can't help, by the very nature of his candidacy, believing in a self-centered Obama-ism above all else.

Comparing anyone to Jimmy Carter feels like an attack because Carter was a failed president who went on to a post-presidential career of great obnoxiousness. But Carter, obviously, won his party's nomination and the general election. Obama could do the same. One difference between the mood among Democrats in 1976 and now is that back then the dragon had been slain in the form of Richard Nixon. Today's dragon, George W. Bush, still lives, so the Democratic base hungers less for Jimmy Carter–like national healing than for Howard Dean–like recrimination. As Obama has begun to pick up a little against Hillary, his message has taken on an angrier edge, while—somewhat discordantly—he has preserved old lines about uniting the country.

Would Obama be as ineffectual a president as Carter? There's no way to know. He needn't, obviously, have Carter's managerial weaknesses, or his poisoned relations with Congress. But there was something inherent in Carter's campaign, and the conceit behind it, that played into his failure. Theodore White notes, "He arrived in Washington having won both his nomination and his election on personality alone." He got stiffed legislatively, having, in White's words, "ignored his Congress, as sinners and politicians."

All presidential candidates think highly of themselves. The personal messianism of a Carter or Obama, though, sets them up to divide the world into acolytes and enemies—Carter's undoing. Obama would feel the same pull. He would be positioned as the self-anointed savior of Washington, an act that would quickly wear thin on Capitol Hill, especially if—as he probably would—Obama takes it seriously.

Carter's signal failures were in foreign affairs. So much of foreign policy is judgment and execution, there's no way to know in advance how Obama would perform. But he seems to have Carter's foreign-policy DNA. Carter saw hostility directed at the United States around the world—even by our sworn enemies—as the result of our own actions, and thought he could lure the Soviet Union out of its aggression through self-abasing gestures and reassuring diplomatic patter. On Iran, Obama has all the same instincts, blaming its aggression around the Middle East on our bullying behavior, forswearing the use of our troops in Iraq to try to check Iranian ambitions within that country, and promising unconditional talks from which the Iranians would surely grab ever more "carrots" because none of Obama's "sticks" would be plausible. Carter complained of our "inordinate fear of Communism"; does Obama believe we have an inordinate fear of Islamofascism?

If Hillary Clinton has her way, we'll never need to find out. Unlike Carter, Obama has an establishment frontrunner standing in his way. Vanquishing her will be hard, but if he does, Obama will believe all the more in the world-shaking newness of his candidacy. The example of Jimmy Carter says, to the contrary, we've been here before, and it wasn't a happy experience. **NR**

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■ 2008 IV

Riding with Romney

An interview with the candidate about his salient problems

BYRON YORK

Northeastern Iowa

MITT ROMNEY is in a hurry. His meet-and-greet in Charles City, at the Floyd County Museum, went a little long after organizers decided to hold it in the museum's tractor annex, where Romney could speak to supporters surrounded by antique tractors made by the Oliver Farm Equipment Company, the now-defunct manufacturer of the first internal-combustion tractors in the United States. Given that Romney is the man who chose to announce his candidacy standing in front of an old car, a new car, and a vintage airplane, it was guaranteed he would want a look at the big green machines.

That takes a little time. But another group of supporters is waiting for him 30 miles away in Mason City, and at this moment, Romney's black SUV is gunning it down Highway 18, hitting 80 miles an hour on a road where it's not unusual to be stopped by the cops for doing much less. But Romney is lucky today, and he arrives at the Mason City Country Club in time to treat the crowd of about 120 mostly older supporters to . . . a PowerPoint presentation.

There are lots of charts, graphs, and bullet points, all on the subject of trade. "Training, Assisting And Empowering U.S. Workers To Succeed In The New Economy," reads one screen. "Opening Markets Fuels U.S. Prosperity," reads another. "You Can't Be For Protectionism And For Iowa's Farmers And Exporters," reads a third. Some screens are crammed with detailed maps and lots of figures.

"I find these charts interesting," Romney tells the group. "You may be bored to tears, but I love some of these things." No one is in tears, but at the very least it's not the kind of presentation that is interrupted by applause, and as he goes on, Romney makes more self-conscious references to the possibility that the audience might be nodding off. This stuff is a great cure for insomnia, he says at one point. At another he frets, "I may have entirely sucked the oxygen out of the room."

The screen fills with a hard-to-read map of what Romney calls "Reagan Zones of Economic Freedom" bubbling up all around the globe—it vaguely resembles one of those old VH1 pop-up videos—and a bit more oxygen goes out of the room. But this is Mitt Romney, the famously data-crunching businessman, doing what he loves best. If the election were decided on stuff like this, he'd win in a landslide.

But in Iowa, as well as the other states that vote early, Romney is fighting on more uncertain turf. Propelled by millions of dollars in advertising, he's been leading in Iowa for a long time, but in the weeks before the January caucuses he faces three serious challenges. One, he must allay the nervousness some GOP voters feel about his Mormon faith. Two, he must convince them that his conversion to the pro-life cause is genuine and permanent. And three, he must persuade them that he is the most electable conservative in the race, the true representative of what he recently called "the Republican wing of the Republican party."

The morning after the PowerPoint session, in the back of the SUV traveling—more slowly this time—from Des Moines to Fort Dodge, Romney talks with me about all three issues. During the conversation his demeanor ranges from confident to analytical to testy. He's coming to the pressure point in his campaign, and he's done virtually everything right so far. But he knows, as the clock ticks down, that he hasn't yet finished the job.

EDEN IN MISSOURI

These days Romney is receiving advice from all sides on whether to deliver The Speech. That refers to an address modeled on John F. Kennedy's 1960 talk to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, in which Kennedy addressed what he called the "so-called religious issue" of his Catholicism. Today, various polls have suggested that between one-quarter and one-third of the electorate would at least hesitate to vote for a Mormon, and in the SUV I ask Romney what he plans to do. At least for now, he says, the speech is a no-go.

"Maybe a speech would be helpful at some point in some setting, but at this stage I don't see a particular requirement or need or value to that," he tells me. A short pause. "But that could change." I ask whether, as some scuttlebutt has it, the speech is already written and is just waiting for the right time. "No, no," says Romney. "If it's going to be written, it will be written by me."

One reason he doesn't feel the speech is necessary, Romney explains, is because he already has plenty of opportunities to talk about Mormonism. "I give that speech almost every day," Romney tells me. "I'm asked questions about my faith and I answer them. I was just recently on Bob Schieffer's program [CBS's *Face the Nation*], and in the first ten minutes he asked questions about my faith and I answered them. I didn't duck any of them."

While it's true that Romney doesn't duck questions—he tells people they're free to ask whatever they want—it's also true that he doesn't always answer them. For example, in the CBS interview, Schieffer asked him, "I'm told that the Mormons teach that the Garden of Eden was in Missouri. Is that correct?" Romney answered: "You know, they're probably the right folks to give you the answers to questions related to a bunch of Mormon teachings. So I'll probably let them respond to questions about specific doctrines." From there, Romney went on to explain that the values of Mormonism are "founded on Judeo-Christian principles" and that Mormonism shares many fundamentals with other faiths. It was a textbook example of Romney's strategy: stress the general similarities between his religion and others, and don't discuss the details of doctrine.

No one has any serious concerns that Romney, were he president, would take orders from the Mormon Church. Rather, the uneasiness about him stems from what some Americans consid-

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er the sheer strangeness of Mormon beliefs. The question that most bothers some of Romney's would-be supporters is whether a Mormon is a Christian. Church officials say yes, pointing out that the name of the church is the Church of *Jesus Christ* of Latter-day Saints.

But a number of evangelicals—even some who support Romney—say no. "As a Christian I am completely opposed to the doctrines of Mormonism," the Rev. Bob Jones III said recently in a statement endorsing Romney. "I'd be very concerned if he tried to make it appear in any of his statements that Mormonism is a Christian denomination of some sort. It isn't. There's a theological gulf that can't be bridged." (Jones went on to say that he was choosing a president, not a preacher, and that Romney best represents "conservative American beliefs, not religious beliefs.")

In the SUV, I bring up a statement by Rep. Bob Inglis, a conservative Republican congressman from South Carolina, who recently recounted a meeting he had with Romney. Inglis told him, "You cannot equate Mormonism with Christianity; you cannot say, 'I am a Christian just like you,'" according to an account of the conversation by Bloomberg News. "If he does that," said Inglis, "every Baptist preacher in the South is going to have to go to the pulpit on Sunday and explain the differences."

"Did Inglis say that to you?" I ask.

"I don't know," Romney says. "He may well have."

"You don't recall the conversation?"

"I have a lot of conversations. I don't recall the exact words of people, but if he says he said that, I'll take his word for it."

"What was your reaction?"

"I don't recall the conversation so precisely that I can describe my exact reaction to that."

With lawyerly phrasing like that, it seems clear Romney doesn't want to talk about it. But I try one more time. "Well, okay, if you have been told that by other people, what is your reaction to the substance of what they are saying?"

"You know, the term 'Christian' means different things to different people," Romney tells me. "Jews aren't Christian. That doesn't preclude a Jew from being able to run for office and become president. I believe that Jesus Christ is the savior of the world and is the son of God. Now, some people say, well, that doesn't necessarily make you a Christian because Christian refers to a certain group of evangelical Christian faiths. That's fine. That's their view. Others say, no, anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as the son of God and the savior should be called Christian. That's fine, too. I'll just describe what I believe and not try to distinguish my faith from others. That's really something for my faith to do and for the churches amongst themselves to consider."

It's a cautious, guarded strategy. The only time Romney has let down that guard was in a radio appearance last August with an Iowa talk-radio host, Jan Mickelson, who seemed determined to prove that Romney did not fully abide by the tenets of the Mormon faith. (Mickelson is not a Mormon.) Off the air, but not out of range of a studio camera, Mickelson goaded Romney into an argument in which Romney not only defended himself ("Let me say that I understand my faith better than you do"), but abandoned his practice of avoiding doctrinal details. When Mickelson brought up the Second Coming, an exasperated Romney explained, "The Church says that Christ appears and splits the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. That's what the Church says. And then, over a thousand years of the millennium, that the world is reigned in two places, Jerusalem and Missouri. . . . The law will come from Missouri, and the other will be from Jerusalem." In spite of himself, Romney had been drawn into doctrine.

It was a remarkable moment, one in which viewers saw a more human Romney than in dozens of campaign appearances. Romney was later surprised to learn that a camera had been running, but after seeing the video—his feistiness was more appealing than his more wonkish speeches—his campaign decided to post it on YouTube.

The uneasiness about Romney stems from what some Americans consider the sheer strangeness of Mormon beliefs.

"You don't show many flashes of anger in public," I say.

Romney laughs. "I call that intensity," he says. "It's just Romney intensity." He tells me the story of his father, George, the governor of Michigan, who had an "intense debate" with a state lawmaker. George Romney was holding the man by his lapels, which ripped in the grip of that Romney intensity. "It may be a bit of a family trait," the son says, "to be very intense and very energized about things you believe very deeply."

'IS THAT SO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?'

Most voters who pay attention to the Republican race know Romney's history on abortion. He ran as a strongly pro-choice Republican in 1994, when he unsuccessfully challenged Ted Kennedy in Massachusetts, and again in 2002, when he successfully ran for governor. Then, in late 2004, in the midst of a debate in the Massachusetts legislature over stem-cell research, he changed his mind on abortion, and later, in 2005, wrote an op-ed in the *Boston Globe* explaining that he is now pro-life. Since those changes occurred so recently, and since they came at the same time Romney was beginning to explore a run for president—his political action committee, Commonwealth PAC, was formed in July 2004, a few months before his stem-cell decision—a number of pro-life voters view his conversion with some suspicion.

"Unfortunately, he just has not had time to prove himself on the change that he has made in his statements," Tamara Scott, head of Concerned Women for America's Iowa branch, tells me.

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"To make them on the road to the presidency is a little concerning." Other Iowa social conservatives I talk to say similar things—one tells me, "He says everything I want to hear, but I just don't have the confidence in him at this point that what he says is really what he believes"—and in the car I remark that Romney still has to convince some voters that he's genuine. "If someone wants to know what my positions are, they simply have to look at what I did as governor," he tells me, "and the record that I have as governor is, I believe, entirely consistent with the record I have as a candidate for president."

"Specifically on the issue of life?"

"Particularly on the issue of life," Romney says. "The first time a bill reached my desk that dealt with life, and the taking of life"—it was a stem-cell measure—"I came down on the side of life. And as I served as governor, several bills had measures that related to life. I came down on the side of the sanctity of life, and at the end of my administration the Massachusetts Citizens for Life gave me the leadership award for my contribution towards protecting human life."

But Romney had seemed firmly pro-choice as recently as the 2002 campaign, and I read him the statement he made in a questionnaire sent to him that year by the National Abortion Rights Action League. "I respect and will protect a woman's right to choose," he told NARAL. "This choice is a deeply personal one. Women should be free to choose based on their own beliefs, not mine and not the government's."

"That sounds like a philosophical position," I say, "something that you came to because of your belief in the relationship of people to their government."

"'Philosophical' is perhaps the right term," Romney answers, "in that it's very interesting philosophically to talk about something in an abstract manner, and then when you become governor, philosophy reaches reality. And I was asked to sign a bill that would take human life, and I simply would not do that and could not do that."

"If I could separate stem cells from abortion," I begin to ask.

"You can't, can you?"

"Well, there are laws that deal with stem cells, and then there is *Roe* itself."

"Well, they both relate to the sanctity of human life."

"But your position was, as far as a woman's right to have an abortion is concerned, that you would protect that and that you believed that *Roe* should be protected."

"I'm not sure what your question is," Romney says, growing visibly irritated. "I changed my view. Is that so difficult to understand?"

One thing that feeds skepticism over Romney's conversion is his habit of pushing his argument a little too far, of cutting a few corners with the record. Take that award from the Massachusetts Citizens for Life. It was presented in May 2007, not by the state organization of Massachusetts Citizens for Life but by the Pioneer Valley Regional Chapter, which represents the western part of the state. When Romney began to cite it in his campaign appearances, group officials in Boston issued a statement "to make clear that the local award did not constitute endorsement by the state organization." The statement went on to give a mixed view of Romney, saying he had taken "a politically-expedient pro-abortion position," but that "admitting that he was wrong took rare courage." So what Romney points to as the stamp of approval from a pro-life group is really a bit less.

Another example: Recently, the Romney campaign, in response to a rather mild criticism on National Review Online, sent out a series of talking points to underscore his pro-life record. Among them was the assertion that "Governor Romney Support[ed] Parental Notification Laws and Opposed Efforts to Weaken Parental Involvement." As evidence, the campaign cited an October 2002 Associated Press account of Romney's debate with his Democratic opponent for governor, Shannon O'Brien. But a look at the debate itself shows that Romney, while opposing a proposal to lower the abortion-without-consent age from 18 to 16, spent a great deal of time reaffirming his pro-choice position. On five different occasions, he vowed to "preserve and protect a woman's right to choose." No one watching the debate or reading the transcript could come away with the impression that Romney was anything but emphatically pro-choice. Yet now, he cites the debate as part of his commitment to life.

REPUBLICAN WING, REPUBLICAN PARTY

Steve Scheffler works in a small, spare space in a West Des Moines office park. He heads the Iowa Christian Alliance, perhaps the most influential social-conservative group in the state. When I visit him on a recent Friday, he's amazed at how wide-open the race in Iowa is. He's been working for nearly 38 years in this field, he tells me, and this year, "I've seen less gravitation towards any one single candidate than ever in the past." Romney is strong, but Mike Huckabee is moving up, and the rest of the field isn't out of it, either.

Romney's support appears to be a bit less secure than that of other candidates. David Redlawsk, a professor of political science at the University of Iowa and co-director of the school's Hawkeye Poll of Iowa caucus-goers, tells me that 70 percent of Romney's supporters in the most recent Hawkeye survey say they are at least somewhat likely to change their mind and support another candidate. While no one has set-in-stone support—for Rudy Giuliani, the change-my-mind number is 60 percent, while it is 53 percent for Fred Thompson and 50 percent for Huckabee—Romney seems the most vulnerable.

Everywhere Romney campaigns, he stresses that a winning Republican candidate will have to appeal to all three parts of the Reagan coalition: economic conservatives, national-security conservatives, and social conservatives. In Nevada recently, he irked some of his opponents when he said that he represents "the Republican wing of the Republican party"—another example, perhaps, of pushing things a little too far. In the car, I ask whether he regrets saying that.

"No," he says. End of answer.

After a long pause, he says, "I didn't say I was the only one. I just said you have to have a candidate that represents the base of the Republican party."

In the end, that is the defining question of Romney's candidacy. Will the GOP base, particularly the part of the base that is strongly pro-life and religiously conservative, accept the man who so recently joined them and whose faith strikes some as odd? Romney has done everything in his power to persuade them. But it's the kind of question that can't be quantified, can't be bullet-pointed on a PowerPoint screen. He'll just have to wait for the answer. **NR**

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■ ESSAY

The Soul and Its Enemies

Countering the materialists, Christian and not

STEPHEN M. BARR

For 2,000 years, Christians have believed that man has a spiritual soul and is therefore unique among terrestrial creatures—that there is, in the words of Pope John Paul II, an "ontological discontinuity" between human beings and other animals. This belief is now under attack, and not only by atheists. Some theologians dismiss the idea of an "immortal soul" as an unbiblical bit of Greek metaphysics grafted onto the Gospel by the early Church Fathers. Some even go so far as to call themselves "Christian materialists."

These are symptoms of a loss of confidence in the face of a materialist critique that many think unanswerable. A whole series of advances in human knowledge have been seen as supporting a physicalist reductionism that would explain man entirely in terms of matter and thereby erase the line between human and animal, and even between human and machine. Long ago, it was shown that "animate" and "inanimate" things are made up of the same chemical elements interacting by the same basic laws. The tracing of human evolution, gene sequencing, and studies of animal intelligence have increasingly revealed continuity between man and lower animals. Neuroscience and studies of the brain have found the physiological bases of many mental faculties and feelings, even ones associated with our moral life. Growing attention to the beginning and end of human life, and to ambiguous conditions that complicate the definition of death, has led many to wonder when precisely the soul arrives and departs, or if it does. Computer technology has shown that a purely physical system, indeed an inanimate one, can perform many "mental" tasks, such as acquiring and processing information, storing it in memory, retrieving it, and using it to make decisions. Indeed, computer programs have reached parity with human beings in that most intellectual of games, chess.

Part of the problem is that many people no longer have any understanding of what the word "spirit" traditionally meant. They can conceive of spirit only as another form of matter, and of the soul only as a kind of parallel body, something spooky and ectoplasmic that surrounds the physical body like an aura or floats up to the ceilings of hospital rooms during near-death experiences and peers down with ghostly retinas at the doings of medical personnel. Even some philosophers apparently can conceive of the soul in no other way than as a little man or "homunculus" inside our heads. ("But then, wouldn't that homunculus have to have an even smaller homunculus inside *its* head?" they ask derisively.)

Mr. Barr is professor of theoretical particle physics at the University of Delaware and author of *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*.

WHAT MAKES US HUMAN?

Some years ago, I asked an audience of students and professors at a Catholic college what the spiritual faculties of human beings are traditionally held to be. The correct answer is rational intellect and free will; but none of them came up with it. One can hardly blame atheists when even Christians no longer remember the answers. Irenaeus of Lyons, the greatest theologian of the 2nd century, did know the answer: "Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his own acts."

Having lost this understanding, many look for human distinctiveness at the level either of physical behavior (such as using tools) or of feelings. To the writers of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, what made the android "Data" ontologically distinct from human beings was his lack of emotion. One of the college students I was addressing complained that the answer "rational intellect and free will" left love out of the picture. By "love" he meant a feeling. He had never been told that love, as distinct from affection, is an act of the *will* whereby one freely wills the good of another person.

Emotion and sensation, which we share with the lower animals, do not pertain to the level of spirit. And yet even the reality of these mere feelings provides a powerful argument against physicalist reductionism. The crucial point was precisely stated by Erwin Schrödinger: "All scientific knowledge is based on sense perceptions, [and yet] the scientific view of natural processes formed in this way lacks all sensual qualities and therefore cannot account for the latter." There seems to be no way to explain from the laws of physics alone the *subjective experience* of sensation (as opposed to the "sensing" of its environment that an unconscious mechanical device can do). In the final analysis, physics is about numbers: numbers calculated by mathematical theories and numbers measured by experiments. One could know the wavelength of green light; the atomic motions that produce it; the measurable electrochemical responses it produces in the retina, the optic nerve, and the visual cortex—and still have no idea of what it is like to see green. Likewise, one can know thermodynamics without knowing what it is like to feel warm. This is what contemporary philosophers call the problem of "qualia." Certainly, chemical reactions in the brain have a causal role in sensation and emotion. But a feeling cannot be analyzed into the motions of particles in space in the same way that such properties of matter as gas pressure or electrical conductivity can be.

Many philosophers prefer to bracket this problem and deal only with the "behavioral mind"—the externally observable things that brains can do. If one can explain how something walks like a man, talks like a man, and performs tasks like a man, then one has explained the human mind, some seem to believe. But theorists are very far from accomplishing even that, according to Jerry Fodor, the highly respected cognitive scientist and philosopher of mind, who wrote in *The Mind Doesn't Work That Way* (2000): "Personally, I am not inclined to celebrate how much we have learned about how our minds work. . . . The current situation in cognitive science is far from satisfactory. Perhaps, somebody will fix it eventually, but not in the foreseeable future, and not with the [theoretical] tools we currently have in hand." He mordantly observed, "We

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still don't have the fabled machine that can make breakfast without burning down the house."

But, again, the question of the human spiritual soul is not simply about internal feelings or external behaviors; it is about reason and free will. Free will is a stumbling block to the materialist, since it quite clearly cannot be accounted for by physics. Physics analyzes events mathematically, and such an analysis can find only two things. To the extent that the behavior of a system is mathematically predictable, it falls under some deterministic "law"; to the extent that it is mathematically unpredictable, it appears as "random." But free will is neither random nor law-bound; it is a *tertium quid*. Freedom is the power to act rationally and therefore responsibly. Someone whose acts were governed either by a fixed mechanical law or by random events in his brain would be entirely lacking in freedom. We would call him compulsive or a madman.

Some materialists dismiss human freedom as an illusion. But if meant literally, this makes no sense. My oldest daughter's physics teacher provocatively informed his class that "we never actually touch anything, it only *feels like* we do." (His point was that the particles in our bodies never actually occupy the same points in space as the particles in the things we touch.) "But if we never actually touch anything," my daughter asked, "how can we know what it 'feels like' to touch something?" That, of course, is also the problem with the notion that free will is an illusion. If free will doesn't exist even as a meaningful category, how can one know what it feels like, so as to have the illusion of it?

A now-standard answer is that since our own behavior is opaque to us and we are not aware of its actual causes at the subconscious and even molecular levels, we posit a mysterious entity that we call "the will." As Francis Crick put it, "What you're aware of is the decision, but you're not aware of what makes you do the decision. It seems free to you, but it's the result of things you are not aware of." Or, in the sharper formulation of E. O. Wilson, "The hidden preparation of mental activity gives the illusion of free will." If this explanation were correct, however, then our every tic, twitch, fleeting impulse, sudden urge, and random thought would be experienced by us as an exercise of free will, and obviously they are not. Rather, we experience free will as a power to choose one way or another. We know we have this power, not by theoretical demonstration, but because we exercise it, just as we know we have the power of sight by seeing. Dr. Johnson's retort to Boswell's arguments against free will retains all its force: "If a man should give me arguments that I do not see, though I could not answer them, should I believe that I do not see?"

THE BASIS OF KNOWLEDGE

If the materialists were right and freedom did not exist, moral terms would lose all meaning. One could still punish and reward to influence behavior, but not because anyone deserved anything. Precisely because machines, animals, and insane people do not act freely, we do not morally praise or blame them. But it is not only moral freedom that is at issue. The consistent materialist must also deny intellectual freedom, thereby undermining reason itself. As the great 20th-century mathematician and physicist Hermann Weyl observed, "There must be freedom in the theoretical acts of affirmation and negation. When I reason that 2 + 2 = 4, this actual judgment is not forced upon me through blind natural causality (a view which would eliminate thinking as an act for which one can be held answerable), but something purely spiritual enters in." As Weyl observed, unless the mind is free, it cannot be "open" to the truth: He saw openness to truth as an inherently spiritual capacity.

Many thinkers have drawn attention to the same point. In 1932, the famous biologist J. B. S. Haldane wrote, "If materialism is true, it seems to me we cannot know that it is true. If my opinions are the result of the chemical processes going on in my brain, they are determined by chemistry, not the laws of logic." More recently, Stephen Hawking worried that if physics produced a "theory of everything" then that theory would have to explain why some people believed in it and some didn't; and their respective beliefs would then be the inevitable consequence of physical processes taking place in their brains rather than of the validity or invalidity of their reasoning.

The question of the human spiritual soul is not simply about internal feelings or external behaviors; it is about reason and free will.

In 1954, Haldane changed his mind: He saw the invention of the computer as proving that something merely physical actually *can* follow the "laws of logic." Reason, however, involves more than just a following of the rules; it requires understanding. A horse obeys the laws of physics, but it doesn't understand them. A computer can follow the laws of logic, but because it doesn't understand anything it also follows illogic if that is what it is programmed to do. If it follows mathematically correct steps in doing a calculation, it is only because a human being first understood what mathematical correctness required and designed the computer program accordingly. In other words, computers do not show that machines can give rise to intelligence, only that intelligence can give rise to machines.

It is not just truth but *meaning* that lies beyond the machine. A machine responds to physical stimuli, but an intellect grasps ideas. An intellect can understand abstract concepts such as justice and beauty, freedom and necessity, which cannot be reduced simply to the configurations of matter. Let us consider, for example, what is involved in understanding the abstract concepts of mathematics (a particularly relevant example, since for materialists the most fundamental truths are those of mathematical physics). What is a number? Is it something that can be found in the material world? Perhaps that is true of "counting numbers" such as 4: We can point to the four legs of a cow or the four sides of a table. But what in the physical world corresponds to the num-

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ber π? (One might be tempted to say, "the ratio of the circumference of a perfectly circular object to its diameter"; but perfectly circular objects do not exist in the real world.) Or what about the 17th-root of 53? Or the transcendentally irrational number whose decimal expansion is .01001100011100001111 . . . ? Most "mathematical objects" exist neither as things nor as aspects of things in the physical world.

Most schools of thought in the philosophy of mathematics would agree that numbers and other mathematical concepts are in one way or another *mental* realities. They exist in minds. But that presents the materialist with a problem, since for him minds are nothing but processes going on in the nervous systems of animals. Numbers and their remarkable properties, the theorems of Euclidean geometry, and indeed all of mathematics, would be nothing in the final analysis but nerve impulses. The same would be true of all of theoretical physics—Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism, the General Theory of Relativity, Schrödinger's equation, the Feynman path integral—what would these be but neurons firing? Some would say that it is not the firing itself of the neurons but the *patterns* in which they fire that are meaningful, just as it is not the ink on the page of the textbook or the chalk-dust on the blackboard that is significant, but the patterns they form that make them "stand for" or "mean" something mathematical. But such an appeal from material *patterns* to meanings is not really open to the consistent materialist. After all, what is going on when the "meaning" of a pattern is being "understood" by a "mind"? For the materialist, simply that in somebody's brain neurons are firing in a particular pattern. For the materialist, then, when all is said and done, all that remains of thought is chemical reactions. That is why one cognitive scientist said that numbers are "neurological creations" and an article in *Newsweek* once announced that "thoughts are . . . electrical signals." Well, toothaches are also electrical signals in the brain and neurological creations. How, then, is the Theory of Relativity different from a toothache?

SCIENCE POINTS BEYOND ITS OWN LIMITS

Modern man has learned to repose more trust in mathematics and physics than in philosophical arguments. Let us leave philosophy aside, then, and ask whether mathematics and physics themselves have given any support to the idea of a spiritual soul. Of course, they cannot do so directly, because by "spirit" is meant something that is *not* physical and *not* governed by mathematical rules. However, they may have done so in an indirect or negative way by bumping up against their own limitations. There are two great discoveries of the 20th century that, according to a few leading physicists and mathematicians, imply that the human mind cannot be explained in merely mechanical terms.

The first is an epoch-making theorem proved in 1931 by the Austrian logician Kurt Gödel. One of the implications of Gödel's Theorem is that mathematics cannot be reduced to the mechanical application of rules, i.e., to mere routine manipulations of the sort that computers can carry out. And since mathematics is something humans do, it seems to follow that there is at least one human activity that is not machine-like. Gödel himself was convinced that the human mind is more than a machine—he called materialism "a prejudice of our time"—but he does not seem to have tried to prove this from his own theorem, at least in print.

In 1961, the Oxford philosopher John R. Lucas wrote: "Gödel's theorem seems to me to prove that Mechanism is false, that is, that minds cannot be explained as machines. So has it seemed to many other people: Almost every mathematical logician I have put the matter to has confessed similar thoughts, but has felt reluctant to commit himself definitely until he could see the whole argument set out, with all objections fully stated and properly met. This I attempt to do."

Though Gödel's Theorem and Lucas's argument are quite subtle, the gist of them can be easily stated. Gödel's Theorem implies that a computer program that is known to perform calculations consistently can be outwitted (in a precise sense that I shall not describe) by someone who knows how it is put together. So that if a man were *himself* a consistent computer program, and he knew his own program, he could *outwit himself*, which would be a contradiction. One

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can also explain Lucas's argument in a different way. Gödel's Theorem showed that no computer program that operates by consistent rules can tell that it is doing so. Human beings, however, can often recognize their own consistency and so must be more than mere computers.

The Gödelian argument as formulated by Lucas was widely attacked, but was taken up again and refined by the eminent mathematician Roger Penrose in his books *The Emperor's New Mind* (1989) and *Shadows of the Mind* (1994). Penrose has not been able to convert many of the skeptics; nor have they managed to refute him. The subject remains extremely contentious. But whether a rigorous Gödelian argument against "mechanism" can be constructed or not, Gödel's Theorem certainly highlights the great difference between the way computers "think" and the way human mathematicians think. Computers rely entirely on automatic rules and symbolic manipulation, whereas human beings grasp the meanings of the symbols and come up with new insights. This contrast is dramatically illustrated in the chess matches between man and machine. Chess-playing programs like the one that narrowly defeated Garry Kasparov consider many *trillions* of positions in deciding upon a move, whereas even the greatest human player considers at most a few thousand, and usually far fewer. And yet this billion-to-one advantage in calculating power is nullified by the human grandmaster's power of understanding.

The other important discovery of the 20th century that may tell us something about the human mind is quantum mechanics. Two great physicists who thought deeply about the implications of quantum mechanics were Sir Rudolf Peierls and the Nobel laureate Eugene Wigner. In a famous essay, Wigner wrote that materialism is not "logically consistent with present quantum mechanics." And according to Peierls, "The premise that you can describe in terms of physics the whole function of a human being, . . . including its knowledge and its consciousness, is untenable. There is still something missing."

The detailed reasoning that led Wigner, Peierls, and others to this conclusion is extraordinarily difficult and cannot be understood without a solid grasp of quantum mechanics. In broad terms, it has to do with the role of probability in quantum physics. The calculations of quantum theory in general yield only probabilities, whereas human beings can interact with the world around them and come to definite conclusions. A contradiction therefore arises if one imagines that everything in the world, including the minds of human beings, is purely physical and adequately describable by the equations of quantum theory. Since those equations always leave things in a probabilistic limbo, they would never be able to say that any human brain or mind reached a particular conclusion—but obviously they often do. How to resolve this apparent contradiction? In the traditional interpretation of quantum mechanics elaborated by John von Neumann, which held sway for about four decades, one was practically forced to say that physics does not give an adequate description of human minds.

This was the position defended by Wigner and Peierls. But many physicists have been uncomfortable with the emphasis that quantum mechanics as traditionally understood gave to the human "observer" and his mind. As the physicist Euan Squires noted, "It is probably fair to say that most members of the physics community would reject [these] ideas. . . . [But] their reasons would be based more on prejudice than sound argument, and the proportion of those who reject it would be much smaller if we considered only those who had actually thought carefully about the problems of quantum theory." Dissatisfaction with the older view has given rise to alternatives, such as the "many-worlds interpretation" of quantum mechanics and Bohmian quantum mechanics. But these are no less controversial, and the subject remains quite unsettled. It will probably remain unsettled for a very long time to come. But even if it does, the fact will remain that—according to several leading physicists—quantum mechanics is incompatible with a materialist account of the human mind.

Those who confidently assert that scientific discoveries have banished the soul to the realm of myth offer only a limited view of the evidence.

There is another respect in which quantum mechanics has served to undermine materialism. Since the time of Newton, it has been argued by many physicists and philosophers that the physical world is a "causally closed" system, by which is meant a system whose laws allow no room for the influence upon it of anything nonmaterial, such as a spiritual soul. Happily, the advent of quantum mechanics, with its merely probabilistic predictions, dealt a blow to "physical determinism" from which it has yet to recover. As Hermann Weyl put it in the same lecture from which I quoted earlier: "We may say that there exists a world, causally closed and determined by precise laws, but . . . the new insight which modern [quantum] physics affords . . . opens several ways of reconciling personal freedom with . . . [the laws of physics]. It would be premature, however, to propose a definite and complete solution of the problem. . . . We must await the further development of science, perhaps for centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, before we can design a true and detailed picture of the interwoven texture of Matter, Life, and Soul. But the old classical determinism of Hobbes and Laplace need not oppress us longer."

We see, then, that those who confidently assert that scientific discoveries have banished the soul to the realm of myth offer only a limited view of the evidence. Indeed, the very possibility of scientific discoveries points to man's openness to truth and his ability to grasp meaning. One does not really need a scientist to confirm that one has a spiritual soul, however. Its powers are daily on display in our lives as rational and free creatures. Of course, there are those who disagree with this. And they are quite free to disagree. But their very freedom to disagree is proof that they are wrong. **NR**

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the long view

ROB LONG

NSA Intercept Radio Frequency Surveillance

Begin extract:

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Is the focus group set?"
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "All set. Dials working. Ready to go."
UMV: "Okay, the debate begins in three minutes. Tell your focus-group moderators to stand by."
UFV: "Roger that. I'm watching the monitor now. I'm watching her on the stage—she's greeting Edwards, greeting Obama. Greeting Russert. Wait, she's turning to the left. I can't tell—is her earpiece in?"
UMV: "It's in."
UFV: "Great job. Can't even see it. Is it on?"
UMV: "I don't know. I'll ask. Senator, can you hear me? Just nod and smile if you can hear me."
UFV: "Is that a smile?"
UMV: "I think. I see teeth. I'll ask her. Senator, if you can hear me, give a thumbs-up sign to someone in the crowd."
UFV: "Got it!"
UMV: "Great. Senator, can you locate the young man in the audience in the wheelchair? He's the one in the red sweatshirt. If you can see him from the stage, please nod in a serious way to Chris Dodd."
UFV: "Got it!"
UMV: "Senator, the kid in the wheelchair is one of ours. He's going to ask you the question about health care. Please be nice to him, okay? It's going to be Question 3a on health care, just like we practiced."
UFV: "Dials up on the outfit, by the way. Young marrieds think she looks like a hip grandma. Remember to compliment wardrobe."
UMV: "Will do. Okay, they're taking their places. Yada yada yada. Opening statements."
UFV: "The focus group here says she looks furious. She's losing married women 35-60."
UMV: "Senator, can you act happier to be there? You're losing women."
UFV: "Wow! Look at her go! She really looks like she's suddenly happy to be there!"
UMV: "We've been working with her."
UFV: "Female dials all back up. Good job!"
UMV: "Great work, Senator, dials are up across the board."
UFV: "She's losing them with the question about the driver's licenses for illegal aliens."
UMV: "Losing them how?"
UFV: "Unclear. I'm checking with the moderators. Guys, which way should she go with the licenses for aliens?"
UMV: "Senator, please stand by on the answer about driver's licenses for illegals, okay? We're having trouble getting a focus-group read."
UFV: "Okay, now she's looking like she's waffling! We're losing men, young marrieds, undecideds—dials are down! Dials are down!"
UMV: "What do I tell her to say?"
UFV: "I don't know. Guys! Do we have the data yet?"
UMV: "Senator, we're getting the poll data as fast as we can. Please try to be as decisive as possible in your non-answer, okay? Until we can crunch the numbers."
UFV: "Okay . . . and the numbers are coming in . . . coming in . . . here they are: Groups are against. Men, women, young voters, homeowners, empty-nesters, and people with RVs, all against. Strongly against. Small-business owners, grandparents, bike riders, preschool-age kids' parents, people who own hunting and/or fishing licenses, home-caregivers, weekly churchgoers, monthly churchgoers, atheists, recyclers, morticians, and people with Facebook pages, all strongly 'strongly against.'"
UMV: "I think she just came out 'for.'"
UFV: "She did?"
UMV: "I don't know, really. It was a confusing answer."
UFV: "Can she backtrack?"
UMV: "Senator, we're getting data that strongly suggests that giving illegal aliens driver's licenses is a hugely unpopular position. Is there any way you can, sort of, backtrack here?"
UFV: "Tell her we're sorry."
UMV: "And Senator, we're awfully sorry about the delay in the data. It's a server issue with our Iowa staff. We'll get into it."
UFV: "She's backtracking right now."
UMV: "What's she saying?"
UFV: "That she never said it."
UMV: "How are the dials?"
UFV: "Flat. Not so good."
UMV: "Can we get the kid in the wheelchair to ask her to clarify?"

UFV: "No! Wheelchair kid is health care. It's too good a photo to give up."
UMV: "The other candidates are piling on right now. Really nailing her for waffling."
UFV: "Ouch. Dials way, way down."
UMV: "Senator, try to act cool, okay? Smile. Rise above it."
UFV: "That's not a smile."
UMV: "We've been working on the smile. It's been a struggle."
UFV: "I'm getting some data that suggests that there's a slight uptick in female dials. They may feel like this is an all-guy pile-on."
UMV: "Do we go with it?"
UFV: "Unclear."
UMV: "What? Damn! Come on, you guys! Get with it! We're running for president, here! And we can't do it unless we have accurate, fast, real-time focus-group data! I need to tell the senator what to say and how to say it! So figure it out and get back to me!"
UFV: "Here comes the kid with the wheelchair."
UMV: "Finally! Somebody tell that kid that if he messes this up, he doesn't get paid."

END EXTRACT

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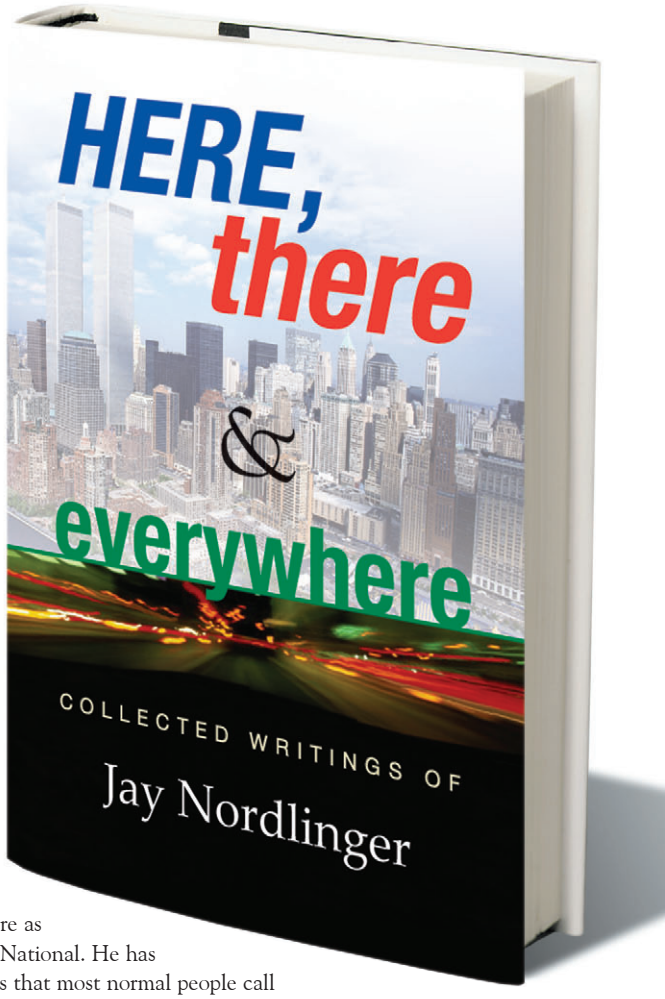

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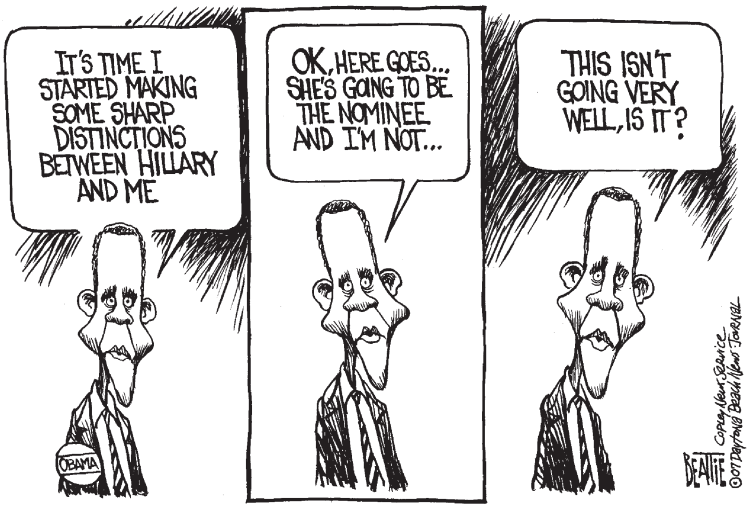
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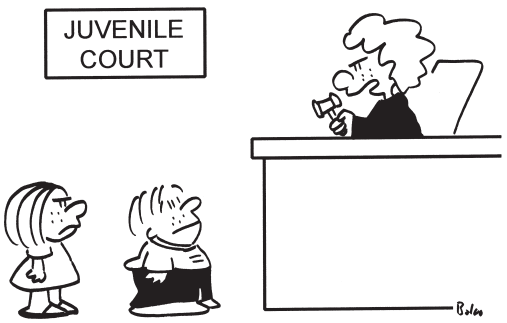

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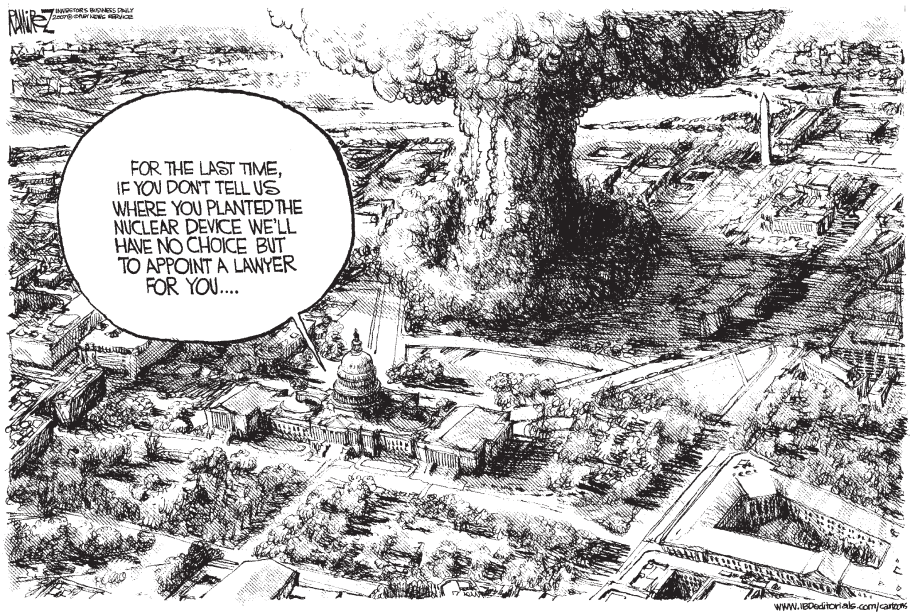
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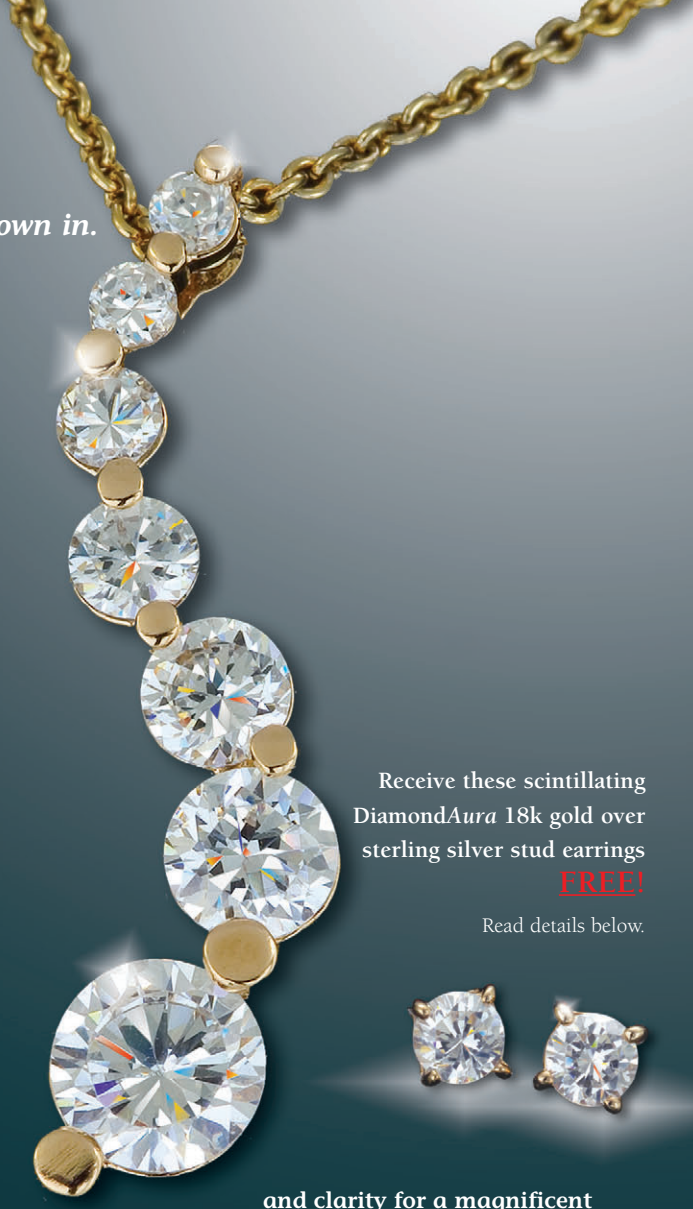

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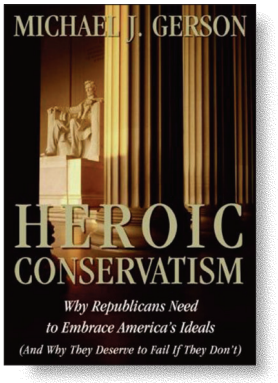

Heroic Conservatism: Why Republicans Need to Embrace America's Ideals (And Why They Deserve to Fail If They Don't), by Michael J. Gerson (HarperOne, 320 pp., $26.95)

DAVID FRUM

SHORTLY before the scheduled publication of this book, *The Atlantic* magazine published a scorching article by Michael Gerson's former White House speechwriting colleague, Matthew Scully. In painstaking detail, Scully depicted Gerson as a man who distorted the record to magnify his own role in events.

The article convulsed Washington. And it presents any reviewer of *Heroic Conservatism* with a dilemma: Should I review the book or review the man?

I worked closely with Gerson and Scully, and I know both men well, as I do the third member of that once-intimate band, John McConnell. I witnessed the events Scully chronicled, and I can attest to the accuracy of Scully's account.

That said, I also know that Michael Gerson is an important figure in American life, whose ideas and values shaped the Bush administration. I anticipated that his prescriptions for the Republican future would deserve a hearing on their own merits, without regard to the personal foibles of their author.

And yet, on repeated readings of advance and final editions of *Heroic Conservatism*, I find that the teller and the tale cannot be so easily separated. A couple of stories illustrate why.

Heroic Conservatism opens with a dramatic account of a meeting in the Oval Office on November 18, 2002. A handful of people have been toiling in secret (Gerson calls it a "humanitarian conspiracy") to develop a plan for an ambitious program to help Africans infected with HIV/AIDS. Not even Condoleezza Rice knows about it: only deputy chief of staff Josh Bolten, his staff, some researchers at the National Institutes of Health, and Gerson himself. Now, on the big day, the plan is to be unveiled to potentially hostile critics. And it is left to Gerson to deliver the plea that carries the decision in favor of the plan.

It's an exciting and even heroic story. Only . . . it's not quite true.

Among the many, many people who knew the "secret" were the two principal authors of the AIDS plan. Jay Lefkowitz, deputy assistant to the president for domestic policy, and Robin Cleveland, later to serve under Paul Wolfowitz at the World Bank, had toiled for weeks on the laborious and technical task of designing and funding the program. Nor was there any real suspense about the decision the president would make at the November 18 meeting.

Gerson, a skilled writer, surely knows that one can shape history as much through the facts one omits as through the facts one includes. By omitting the true protagonists from the story, he aggrandizes the roles of those he includes, starting with himself. That pattern is sustained throughout the book.

Thus, on page 59 of *Heroic Conservatism*, Gerson tells a story of Election Day 2000: "Election night came in Austin along with a cold and steady rain. I paced in the campaign headquarters, then walked up Congress Street to the large, outdoor platform that had been constructed for the victory celebration. I expected a narrow win. But I had, folded in my pocket, the only copy of a concession speech, which had not been shown to Karen, Karl, or the candidate, out of superstition and awkwardness. It began: 'My fellow Americans . . . '"

Reading that passage casually, you would be led to the conclusion that the speech that Gerson was carrying was Gerson's work. It was not. Scully and McConnell had written it by themselves.

Some corrections of these omissions seem to have been inserted at the last minute. Comparing the early-release version of the first chapter to the final printed version, I notice that many appearances of the phrase "I wrote" have been amended to "I helped to write."

But other omissions remain. And awkwardly, one of them involves me.

I was not altogether surprised to find no mention of my own White House work in the pages of *Heroic Conservatism*. Scully and McConnell, who contributed vastly more than I ever did, get only the most glancing references. But I *was* surprised to find an observation from my own White House memoir reprinted almost verbatim and without credit on pp. 36–37 of *Heroic Conservatism* as the author's own invention.

FRUM (2003): "Rove had ideas that nobody else had—and that was his value to the president. Hughes had the same ideas that everybody else had—and that was hers."

GERSON (2007): "Karl was valuable because he thought in ways that nobody else did. Karen was valuable because she thought in ways that everyone else did, which is often the key to being an effective communicator."

I have been assured that the passage will be attributed in future printings of the book. It was this episode, however, that persuaded me I had better set the record straight myself.

Heroic Conservatism is both a memoir and a work of advocacy. What it advocates is "morally driven" politics—a politics, alas, to which few conservatives or Republicans measure up. Most conservatives, including many who served in the Bush administration, do not share Gerson's "vision of compassion and freedom." As he sadly observes: "Traditional conservatism has a piece missing—a piece shaped like conscience." For these conser-

Mr. Frum is the author of the forthcoming book *Comeback: Conservatism That Can Win Again*.

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vatives, "any idea of the common good is viewed as a dangerous myth." They are engaged, rather, in "a tired and cynical defense of the status quo."

Against this dismal background, Gerson champions an alternative politics of uncompromising humanitarianism. "Where does someone belong who is pro-life *and* pro-poor? Someone who supports the traditional family *and* increased spending to fight AIDS? Someone who is passionate about the rights of handicapped children in America *and* the lives of displaced children in Darfur? I know that I have often felt homeless in the traditional camps of American politics."

Of one thing, however, he is sure: Everything depends on unflinching personal integrity: "Traditional conservatism may celebrate a weary virtue, but history, in case after case, is only moved by an eager purity."

Personally, I do not agree with that last statement. Eager purity leads to bad results at least as often as to good ones. What history does suggest, however, in case after case, is that those who most eagerly profess moral purity do not always practice it.

Gerson promises conservatives that in politics, at least, virtue will be its own reward. His brand of politics is not only "noble"—a favorite adjective—but also profitable. He repeatedly promises that his preferred heroic conservatism will gain votes for the GOP: "If Republicans run in future elections with a simplistic anti-government message, ignoring the poor, the addicted, and children at risk, they will lose, and they will deserve to lose." By contrast, "heroic conservatism can appeal to the conscience, inspire the nation, and change the world."

This raises a vexing question: If heroic conservatism really can rally the nation, why has seven years of it left the nation so very conspicuously unrallied? If present trends continue, George W. Bush will exit the White House as the most continuously unpopular president since Harry Truman. The Bush-led GOP is widely condemned as corrupt, arrogant, and incompetent. In generic polls, voters prefer Democrats over Republicans on almost every issue.

The troubles go beyond polls. Although America has prospered under George W. Bush, many of the social indicators that ought to concern a heroic conservatism have trended in the wrong direction. Poverty has increased, and in many American cities crime is worsening. As best we can tell, there has been no sustained increase in volunteering. The international democracy agenda that opened with such promise has lost its momentum. Gerson himself has to admit that the trends are against him, or (as he puts it) "the darker impulses of conservatism have become more assertive, more public, and more pronounced."

What went wrong? With fascinating unintentionality, *Heroic Conservatism* itself points to the answer.

Let's revert to that anecdote about the

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2002 Oval Office meeting on HIV/AIDS. As Gerson reports, many administration officials strenuously opposed the program the president was considering. The Office of Management and Budget protested that the program would cost too much. The Centers for Disease Control worried that the program seemed "half-baked." Staffers at the National Security Council warned that direct foreign aid to local health-care programs had, in the past, often been stolen or wasted. In the face of all these objections, the president posed a stark question: "Will this work?"

At this moment, the story goes, Gerson spoke up. "If we can do this and we don't, it will be a source of shame." The president chimed in: "That's Gerson being Gerson!" And the program proceeded.

So, okay: *Did* it work?

Curiously enough, Gerson seems very little interested in the answer to that question. He tells a moving story about visiting AIDS treatment centers in Africa. But that emotional response does not substitute for analysis. In the nearly five years since the program went into effect, it has been intensely studied by experts inside government and out. It is generally agreed that the program has done some good in treating Africans infected with HIV/AIDS: Of the 25 million or so infected Africans, about 1 million are now receiving drug treatments paid for by the U.S. Treasury. At the same time, many knowledgeable people contend that the program's prevention dollars are largely wasted.

What's the final verdict? The experts disagree, and I am not expert enough to judge who is right. I do know, however, that my above paragraph, written on the basis of a single afternoon's reading and telephoning, contains more hard information on the program's results than you will find in all 300-plus pages of *Heroic Conservatism*.

Americans are deeply compassionate people. But they are also deeply pragmatic people. They want results, not a politics of moral gestures. And all too often, moral gestures are all that the Bush administration has offered.

Here's another example, this one from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Gerson writes: "I hoped that Hurricane Katrina would force the American political class to confront extreme poverty and racial injustice in the shadow of our affluence." He takes enormous pride in the speech George W. Bush delivered in Jackson Square, New Orleans, on September 15, 2005, declaring a "duty to confront this poverty with bold action."

But the president never specified the kind of action he had in mind in the speech, and over the next few days it became embarrassingly apparent that this was because his administration had nothing much to propose. The administration cobbled together a package of initiatives headed by a proposal for a Gulf Coast "opportunity zone"—an idea from the 1980s that quickly collapsed of its own insubstantiality.

Americans want results, not a politics of moral gestures. And all too often, moral gestures are all that the Bush administration has offered.

Gerson laments that this speech became "a lesson in the limited power of words." Yet this misses the point. Bush's words in Jackson Square were *enormously* powerful. By promising something that the administration had no plans to do, the Jackson Square speech inflicted terrible and permanent damage on the administration's credibility. It is precisely because a president's words are always powerful that they should not be used promiscuously.

It was not Michael Gerson who failed to generate plans for a grand conservative war on poverty. But in the absence of grand plans, a speechwriter ought to modulate his grand language. Instead, through the second Bush term there occurred a dangerous decoupling of words and actions. As actions shriveled, the words inflated; as the administration's ambitions narrowed, its rhetoric soared.

Never, of course, did the rhetoric soar higher than in the second inaugural address, the speech in which George W. Bush pledged himself to an "ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

Barely a week after that speech, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak arrested the principal opposition candidate for president, a democrat and liberal named Ayman Nour. Nour was stripped of his parliamentary immunity and tossed in jail. Independent election observers were barred from Egypt. On election day, September 7, 2005, Mubarak reported himself the winner with 88.6 percent of the vote. Through this ordeal, the U.S. government could barely bring itself to utter a word of protest. Nor did it protest when the Saudi government reversed itself and forbade female participation in the Spring 2005 municipal elections, the first Saudi elections since the 1960s. The Egyptians and Saudis were testing the president: Did he really mean what he had said? They rapidly discovered the truth: No, he did not. The speechwriter was too powerful and important to be curbed. But he was not powerful and important enough to get his way. The relationship between Gerson and the rest of the government reminds me of a savage little witticism uttered by Frederick the Great: "My subjects and I have come to an understanding that suits us both: They may say what they please, and I do as I please."

The bitter irony of this story is that, in many ways, the Bush administration has made important progress in the Middle East. It has forced the Saudis and other Gulf states to open their banking systems to outside audit. It has cut the flow of funds to al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas. It has helped to establish a real democracy in Iraqi Kurdistan, and it did push Syrian troops out of Lebanon. It has emboldened publics throughout the Middle East to demand more accountability and less corruption from their leaders. Above all, the Bush administration's big idea—that Islamic extremism is nurtured by the authoritarian politics of the Middle East—has gained broad acceptance in the West and in the Arab world.

Tragically, all of these achievements have been overshadowed by the enormous gap that has opened over time between the Bush administration's increasingly magniloquent words and the necessarily more frustrating realities. Some will say the Bush administration should have promised less. Others will counter that the administration should have delivered more. What is certain is that an administration, like an individual, can win some immediate applause by presenting itself as finer than it is. But the truth will always out. **NR**

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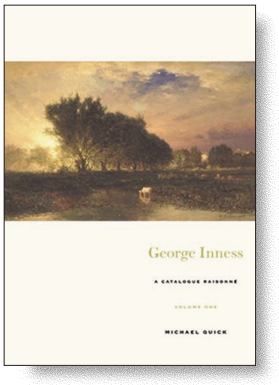
A Neglected Master



George Inness: A Catalogue Raisonné, by Michael Quick (Rutgers, 2 vols., 1,274 pp., $400 the boxed set)

ROGER KIMBALL

HERE's an early Christmas-gift idea for that special art-lover on your list. George Inness (1825–1894) is one of the two or three greatest American painters (along with Thomas Eakins and whoever your favorite happens to be), and this sumptuous catalogue raisonné—some two decades in the making—is the definitive record of Inness's achievement. I know: At $400 a pop, the book is probably one you will want to reserve for someone you regard with particular affection—or perhaps someone whom you wish so to regard you. I hasten to point out, however, that this lucky individual might just as well be you as another.

Don't be intimidated by the book's girth or academic appurtenances. This may be an exhaustive inventory of the work of a prolific artist. But with its scores of color plates, it is also a book that can be browsed with enjoyment as well as consulted for information. These handsome volumes, elegantly boxed, will be at home as much on the coffee or (sturdy) bedside table as on the library shelf.

Michael Quick, for many years a curator of American art at the Los Angeles County Museum, ably combines scholarly thoroughness with a connoisseur's eye and a genuine humanist's sense of why art matters. His insistence on examining firsthand the works he describes—he seems to have visited nearly every notable art museum and private collection in the United States—certainly gives this book a rare authority in an age when "object-oriented" criticism is disparaged for the sake of "theory" or expressions of political inclination. The text accompanying the nearly 1,200 items in the catalogue proper is a model of art-historical prose as it used to be—clear, cautious, understated. But Quick also understands that most of us go to art primarily for the spiritual refreshment it offers. His introductory essays for each decade of Inness's work are lively, robust appreciations of a widely esteemed but also widely misunderstood artist.

George Inness occupies a curious place in the pantheon of American artists. He is, as Jacques Barzun said of Walter Bagehot, well-known without being known well. Although he suffered the obloquy of early neglect and poverty—things were so desperate in the 1850s that he once attempted suicide—by the 1860s he was on the upward path towards adulation and financial security. By the time he died, in 1894, he was full of honors, a reigning dean of American art. Among critics and fellow artists, his achievement is almost universally recognized and has been since the 1880s, when he entered his greatest, if also his most elusive, phase. It is recognized but not, except here and there, properly celebrated. I opened to the index of my copy of H. W. Janson's *History of Art*—a standard text: nary a mention of Inness. A quick check in Clement Greenberg's collected essays turned up only one passing reference to Inness. (I was happy to see that Paul Johnson, in his *Art: A New History*, at least refers to Inness as the "brilliant American master.")

And even when Inness is discussed, it is often as a member of the Hudson River School, a designation that mistakes geographical propinquity and influence for essential aesthetic filiation. For while Inness was born on the river in Newburgh, N.Y., and learned early on from the Hudson River School masters Thomas Cole and

Mr. Kimball is co-editor and co-publisher of *The New Criterion*.

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Asher Durand, his mature work explores a different register of aesthetic emotion. In the same way, Inness's early enthusiasm for the Barbizon school—or, indeed, for the work of Claude Lorrain or such earlier Dutch masters as Hobbema or Ruisdael—led some observers to mistake some visual kinship for underlying spiritual kinship. Inness's art is a good illustration of the fact that two things can look similar and yet have very different spiritual valences.

Although best known as a painter of landscapes, Inness was in fact a wide-ranging artist, as adept at figure painting and highly finished "old masterish" pictures as he was at the gauzy, atmospheric landscapes with which we associate his name. His early apprenticeship in an engraver's shop burnished native talent into prodigious technical command. He was an inveterate traveler, making the first of many trips to Europe in 1851 in his middle 20s. He was also an insatiable aesthetic explorer, always on the lookout for new means to employ in his quest to depict those "regions of the unknown" that he identified with spiritual truth. (Inness once said that he didn't want to be a "cake" but to remain a "dough," ever susceptible to fresh impressions.) It is one of Michael Quick's signal achievements in this book to have parsed the complex history of Inness's stylistic evolution, introducing us to a significantly more complicated and multidimensional figure than we knew before.

In an interview in *Harper's* magazine in 1878, Inness remarked that the "true use of art" is "to cultivate the artist's own spiritual nature." Inness was one of a large international fraternity—their number included figures as disparate as William Blake, Balzac, Yeats, and Baudelaire—who found a key to that spiritual nature in the teachings of the Swedish scientist-cum-mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772). For Swedenborg, the physical world depended upon and was interpenetrated by an immaterial world whose truths could be glimpsed or intuited through material "correspondences."

Inness was introduced to Swedenborg's ideas by the artist William Page in 1863, and by the end of the decade had been baptized in the Swedenborgian church. Baudelaire, in an homage to Swedenborg called "Correspondances," famously spoke of nature as "forests of symbols." But as Quick shows, in Inness's art, the issue is not symbols but intimations made palpable through art: not "this *means* that" but "this *reveals* that." The unseen, the spiritual, is rendered "through the way he painted the picture rather than through symbolism."

Perhaps Quick's biggest contribution in this book is to show the evolving painterly means through which Inness struggled to communicate the impress of the reality he sought. It was a process of accelerating hide-and-seek: distinct foregrounds set upon an enveloping mist of sunlight giving way to ever more diaphanous surfaces in which contrasting bands of color (think proto-Mark Rothko) conjure with poignant but elusive feelings.

As always when art is enlisted in the service of the ineffable, the inextricably material means of art limn a threshold beyond which art cannot pass without abandoning itself. Thus Mallarmé spoke of poetry as "a brief tearing of silence." Thus we find Inness lamenting, "If I could only paint [nature] without paint." Art strains against the limits of its medium to express the inexpressible. Whether all of this is sound metaphysics is a question we can leave to one side. George Inness (like Mallarmé, like Baudelaire) shows that this journey to art's borderlands can issue in works that are as moving as they are memorable. **NR**

IDOLS

Suddenly they look ridiculously old
Our idols—comical and out of place
To us, who through our priest-craft pierce their cold
Glamour and glimpse their terrible vacuity;
Yet they are worshipped by the race
Whose twisted flames dance on each brazen face.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

■ TELEVISION ■

Boys Behaving Badly

PETER SUDERMAN

Mad Men, the critically lauded new series on AMC that not long ago wrapped up its debut season, takes place in the boozy, smoke-filled haze of a fictional top-tier advertising firm in Manhattan circa 1960. It's a world where advertising is a business, sure, but also a boys' club, where handsome men earn even more handsome salaries and are served by wives at home and a pool of willing secretaries at work. They drink, they smoke, they carouse, they crack wise and openly engage in racism, anti-Semitism, and blatantly sexist talk—and that's just while they're on the clock. The show covers the entire catalog of business-class hedonism in pre-sexual-revolution Manhattan, painting the island—or at least the Upper East Side—as a playground for the WASPy and wealthy. As one of the junior executives' fathers says, "I'm telling you boys, you've got it made. Martini lunches. Gorgeous women parading through the office. In my next life, I'm coming back as an ad man."

Yet if the series is any guide, the ad man's life is no delight. Despite the constant revelry on display, the show maintains an air of concerned detachment, and nearly every character sports a mood of perpetual anxiety or frustration. Even when the gang of Madison Avenue suits is standing around with drinks in their hands, grinning and barking out epithets and coarse jokes, the frivolity is just a front masking a sea of inner turmoil. They seem to behave as they do merely because it goes with the job and the times: It's a requirement, not a pastime. When two of the executives share a midday drink in the office,

Continued on page 54

Mr. Suderman is associate editor of *Doublethink*.

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Nordlinger's Mélange

National Review is pleased to announce the publication of *Here, There & Everywhere: Collected Writings of Jay Nordlinger*. The book contains almost 100 pieces, on a great variety of subjects. It's a little over 500 pages long, with a generous index. The cost is $24.95, with additional copies costing $19.95. You may use the order form printed on page 45, shortly before the Books, Arts & Manners section. And we thought we'd introduce the book by printing a version of Nordlinger's preface, below.

Here, There & Everywhere is a grab bag of a book, as its title may suggest. It contains pieces from many locales, and about many subjects. The book is organized into eight chapters, beginning with "Society."

In this chapter, there are pieces on the honorific "Dr.," the pronunciation of place-names, the behavior of bookstore clerks—that sort of thing. The second chapter is "Politics." It begins with an account of Election Night 2000—a very strange evening (and early morning), as you may recall. And I include a couple of look-backs at President Clinton. (Look if you dare.)

"People" gives you 19 of them—people, that is. Among them are—let's see—George W. Bush, Robert Conquest, Natan Sharansky, Phil Gramm, Naguib Mahfouz, Condi Rice, Al Sharpton, Garrison Keillor, Maxine Waters, Rosie O'Donnell, Cap Weinberger, Rodney Dangerfield . . . and assorted others.

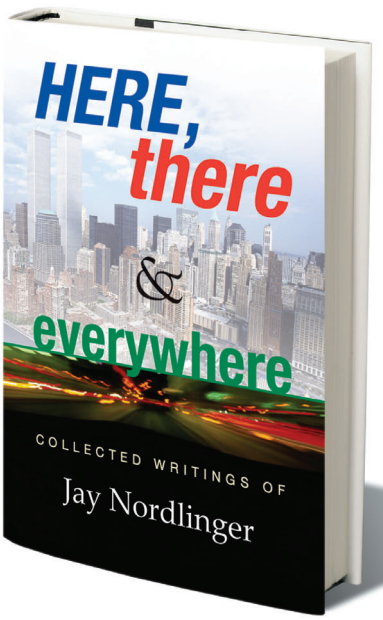
In "The World," I have a speech in Greece, reports from Davos, reports from the Middle East, a speech at Harvard (about Solzhenitsyn's famous commencement address there). And then comes a chapter called "Cuba and China."

People sometimes say, "Why do you write so often about human rights in Cuba and China?" And one answer is, "Because so few others do. The fields are rather open." Cubans, in particular, suffer from the neglect of the world press, or, worse, misrepresentation. I've offered a few crumbs; Cubans act as though these were big fat loaves.

Next comes a brief chapter on golf, in which I discuss Tiger, Hogan, and other figures, large and small. And then . . . "Music."

This chapter contains no criticism, which is to say, no pure music criticism (or practically none). Instead, there are feature pieces, many of them about personalities: Pavarotti, Leon Fleisher, Birgit Nilsson, Meredith Willson (the composer of *The Music Man*), and so on. There are also several dispatches from Salzburg. And there's even a piece on the music of political conventions and presidential campaigns.

See how worlds sometimes collide?



Last is a chapter called "Personal," which is autobiographical and—surely as a consequence!—somewhat offbeat.

Some of the decisions about where to put these pieces were pretty arbitrary—maybe even a little capricious, truth to tell. For example, I have put a piece on the *New York Times* in "Politics." And, speaking of the *Times*, what do you do with a piece on their campaign against the Augusta National Golf Club? You could put it in "Society"; I put it in "Golf."

I have written some introductory notes, where I thought them necessary, or helpful. Otherwise, a reader should be able to jump right in. And I have resisted the temptation to edit, after the fact, in order to make myself look better: smarter, more prescient, less dumb. I have left the pieces almost exactly as they were originally published. Rereading them, I winced a few times. But I did no tampering, bowdlerizing, or covering up. I will live with my words (eat them?).

Besides which: A number of these babies are snapshots in time.

Believe it or not, I had no idea that "Here, There, and Everywhere" was a Beatles song until I'd titled this book. (The Beatles aren't necessarily my bag, although I like "Penny Lane" as much as the next guy—probably more than the next guy.) Hearing my title, a few people have said, "Oh, like the Beatles song?" Er, no—like the English expression. Which is where the Beatles got *their* title, too.

And not three weeks ago, I was sitting on a plane next to someone reading a book on the Fab Four: *Here, There, and Everywhere*. Ah, well. . . .

Bill Buckley has been the dedicatee of innumerable books, and he is the natural and right dedicatee of this one. I said to him, "As the dedicatee, at least you won't have to write the foreword!" (WFB has probably written more forewords than anyone else in history.) What can I say about him? That he is my favorite writer? That he has had incalculable influences on me? That he is perpetually kind, and interesting, and lovable, and thrilling?

I could say those things, and a million more. But I'll zip it, for now. Bill Buckley is not responsible for the contents of this book, heaven knows. But I can't imagine doing what I do without him—without his example. **NR**

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one of them laments that, in decades past, ad men used to drink for pleasure. But now, he dourly muses, "We drink because that's what men do."

And that's the problem, not just for the characters, but for the series as well. It's so busy shaking its head at its protagonists' politically incorrect indulgences that it forgets that, whatever else you might think of their actions and indiscretions, those foibles afforded a certain amount of fleshly satisfaction. Instead of a hot-blooded show about the wild lives of New York's advertising bad boys, we get a museum piece—beautifully produced, no doubt, but in thrall to certain modern sensibilities—on the unenlightened ways of a previous generation. So what ought to be a vicarious thrill is, instead, little more than a high-gloss history lesson. To put it another way: On *Mad Men*, everyone is always smoking, but no one ever enjoys it.

That's a shame, because the series ought to be a crowd-pleaser. The show's creator, Matthew Weiner, is, like so many TV producers these days, a veteran of *The Sopranos*. And it's easy to pick out similarities between the two shows. Both revolve around confident men with families in the suburbs and powerful, alluring jobs that afford them easy access to money, influence, and women. And both make liberal use of dramatic irony, relying on the thoroughly modern mores of their audiences to cast judgment on the follies of their characters.

But *Mad Men* plays like an inversion of Weiner's old show, trading ferocious expression for button-down repression. Unlike the ill-tempered, disreputable louts who made up the cast of *The Sopranos*, *Mad Men* is populated by eminently respectable East Coast upper-crusters. But, strangely enough, the brutes on *The Sopranos* were, especially in early seasons, more sympathetic—and noticeably more fun to watch. One of that show's great triumphs was finding ways to get its audience to relate to its criminal characters, despite their murderous ways, and allowing viewers to enjoy the vicious thrills of the gangster lifestyle. The show never sanctioned its characters (by the end it rather despised them), but it never let its audience forget why they lived the lives they did.

Mad Men, though, is too timid to let its viewers in on the fun, choosing to judge its characters safely and subtly, through the lens of modernity. And as a result, it's passionless. Where *The Sopranos*'s New Jersey was stalked by thugs who could barely control themselves, slobs and poor communicators who acted out at every opportunity, *Mad Men*'s Manhattan is covered in cool, classy wordsmiths, professional smooth-talkers who pride themselves on keeping it all in, even from the audience.

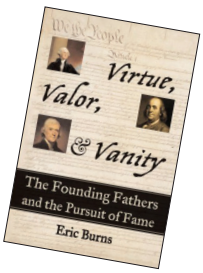
Chief among them is Don Draper, a senior creative executive at the firm, and the show's point-*mensch*. Played with marvelous, dour intensity by Jon Hamm, Draper exudes an air of timeless, chiseled elegance. He's so effortlessly suave that you half expect to find out that his mother sipped a martini during childbirth and that he was born wearing gold cufflinks. Of course, this is partly just a natural reaction to the fact that Draper's a mystery, a man whose past is known neither to viewers nor to the other characters. "Who knows anything about that guy," a colleague wonders. "No one's ever lifted that rock. He could be Batman." Maybe not Batman, but there's more than a touch of Bruce Wayne—a man who would be alluring but blank without his alter ego, which is exactly how Draper comes off.

In other words, Draper looks sharp, but he's empty, and that more or less sums up the show. It looks gorgeous, of course, but fine china encased in glass rarely stirs the heart. Meanwhile, there's not enough to the rest of it. The larger narrative is thin and uninvolving, a serious pitfall in the era of the sprawling, Dickensian, multi-season arcs now common on shows like *The Wire* and *Lost*. Nor are any of the characters worth coming back for. Thanks to the societal strictures the show is so keen on highlighting (and critiquing), nearly everyone is just one variation or another on privileged WASP repression. Perhaps Thoreau would be thrilled to find a show that seems to take his line about all men leading "lives of quiet desperation" as its guiding principle, but for the rest of us the question quickly becomes, why should we care?

Because, eventually, all that remains is the show's banal scolding, creaky condescension, and limp attempts at social satire. Every episode is peppered with scenes that add little to the story, existing only to shock viewers offhandedly with the primitive attitudes of its protagonists. It's presented without too much overt hand-waving, but subtlety only goes so far. And in this case, it's just the tempered, intellectual's version of posing, hands on hips, and tsk-tsking: Can you *believe* these overpaid louts say such things about women, about Jews, about blacks? Look how the housewives treat the divorced woman who moves into the neighborhood, how the secretaries trade in petty power games and gossip. This is how the '60s were, class; aren't you glad we're past that, and better now?

Well, yes. But the show is just as guilty as its characters of making nice and then quietly, archly casting judgment. In the end, the show's constant chiding is too easy and too self-congratulatory, and refuses to acknowledge the passions and temptations that drove the era, preferring merely to recount its errors. Its only pleasure is in looking into the past and expressing relief that it's over. **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■



ERIC BURNS—the slyly intelligent host of the media-criticism show *Fox News Watch*—has been writing what by now amounts to an impressive mini-bookshelf of works on American history. His latest book, ***Virtue, Valor, & Vanity: The Founding Fathers and the Pursuit of Fame*** (Arcade, 239 pp., $25), is an interesting examination of the psychology of the Founders—who, as statesmen-politicians, had an ambivalent attitude toward what Shakespeare called "the bubble reputation." Burns writes that "the Founders sought a kind of fame we do not know today," one based neither on notoriety nor on reckless heroism but on an ideal of public-spirited virtue that had its roots in the Roman Republic. He praises them judiciously for "the communality of their vision, the breadth of their insight, and the humility of their actions."

—MICHAEL POTEMRA

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■ FILM ■

Lame Lambs

ROSS DOUTHAT

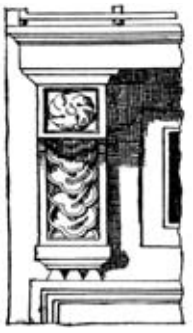
MIDWAY through one of the three narratives that twine through *Lions for Lambs*, Robert Redford's hilariously awful drama about the War on Terror, Jasper Irving, an up-and-coming Republican senator played by Tom Cruise, steps out of his office to take a phone call. The journalist who's been interviewing him, print-and-television veteran Janine Roth (Meryl Streep), rises and strolls around the room, taking in the various photographs adorning the walls: Irving with Dick Cheney, Irving with Condoleezza Rice, Irving with George W. Bush. The hawkish senator has spent the first half of the interview trying to sell Roth, a liberal who supported the invasion of Iraq and now bitterly regrets it, on a new strategy for the war in Afghanistan. The battering-ram certainty of his rhetoric threatens to carry all before it, but the photos are mute reminders—to Roth, and to the audience—that when it comes to Republicans and military strategy, there are only four words that matter: *Don't get fooled again!*

Or at least I assume that's the effect that Redford was shooting for. I was thinking: *What's Tom Cruise doing with Dick Cheney?*

I mean no disrespect to Cruise; his performance, however risible, is nowhere close to the worst thing about this stagy, talky, idiotic film, and it would take a master thespian to squeeze an ounce of plausibility from the lines the script requires him to spout. *Lions for Lambs* is a rare achievement: In just 88 minutes, it ranges across war, politics, journalism, and academia, and demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that the filmmakers are completely, laughably ignorant about all four. Indeed, I commend it to GOP hawks, to be used as propaganda. I have my share of doubts about the Bush administration's foreign policy, but if the morons behind this movie are right then I don't want to be.

The only question is which strand of the story is most embarrassing. Maybe it's the Streep-Cruise tête-à-tête, in which the absurdity of the premise (a new military strategy is announced in a private interview by the Hollywood equivalent of John Thune, rather than in a press conference by the president or the secretary of defense) is exceeded by the absurdity of the strategy itself, which sounds like something my ten-year-old self might have dreamed up while plotting the conquest of the world. Afghanistan will be secured from the Taliban, Cruise's Irving insists, by perching small Special Forces platoons on snowy mountaintops; they'll control the high ground, you see, and thus the country. Naturally, instead of asking follow-up questions like "How will they be re-supplied?" Streep's reporter confines herself to lecturing Irving about how you can't "kill people to help people," and explaining that this is just Vietnam all over again. "Equivocation is defeat!" he brays; she asks him if he's ever heard of The Who, and adds, in case we aren't clear on the point, "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." (I'm not kidding: She really says this.) It's like watching Sean Hannity debate Jane Fonda after they both spent the whole day together sniffing glue.

But wait—don't choose yet. There's another laughably embarrassing dialogue to consider, this one between a spoiled, cynical young college student (Andrew Garfield) and the wise, craggy, idealistic Professor Malley—played, of course, by Redford himself. The kid, you see, is brilliant and promising but isn't applying himself. He just wants to have a nice house in the suburbs and drive a Benz; he doesn't care about changing the world. But Redford's professor does, and he's going to tell it like it is: What good is a fancy car, he points out, when America's "streets and highways are becoming Third World?" (And no, I don't think he means "Third World" the way Tom Tancredo does.) "Rome is burning, son," Malley declaims, "and the problem isn't with the people who started it . . . It's with us, all of us, who just fiddle!" (I'm not kidding: He really says this.)



To shake the kid out of his apathy, Redford's professor tells him a story about two other students he once taught, two working-class heroes (literally) who committed themselves to changing the world instead of just griping about it. Of course, what they did was join the military, over Malley's anguished protestations—but just because their lefty professor hates the military-industrial complex that's shipped them overseas doesn't mean he can't "revere the reason they went." (Message: Left-wing movie stars support the troops too!)

This brings us, in turn, to our third storyline, in which Michael Peña and Derek Luke play the students-turned-soldiers, now stationed in Afghanistan. (Perceptive audiences will note that they're Hispanic and black, while the spoiled-rotten kid hanging out on the home front and being lectured by Redford is white. I think the filmmakers may be trying to tell us something!) Inevitably, they're on the front lines of Senator Irving's bright new strategy, which turns out to be just as dumb as it sounds in a Capitol Hill office. Instead of seizing the high ground, they end up pinned down under enemy fire on an Afghan mountainside, trapped waist-deep in snowdrifts and unable to do anything except fire their weapons, wait for rescue, and (like everybody else in this stupid movie) talk, talk, talk.

Oh, and all of these storylines are—wait for the dramatic irony, folks—happening *at exactly the same time*. Redford's professor is lauding his two ex-students at precisely the moment they're fighting for their lives half a world away. Cruise's senator is announcing his new strategy at precisely the moment that it's begun to go awry. When Irving's hawkish spiel gets interrupted by a phone call, it's almost certainly bad news from the front—because everything is connected! Or again, when Streep's reporter gets back to her newsroom, her boss wants her to take her exclusive and "put it on the crawl" (because that's what journalism has become, alas . . .), and sure enough, when the spoiled college student returns to his frat house and flops down in front of a celebrity-news segment on TV, there—on the crawl!—is a two-line bulletin about a new military strategy in Afghanistan. Because everything is connected!

And that's the best thing to be said about *Lions for Lambs*. Everything is connected: When one of its stories ends, they all do. **NR**

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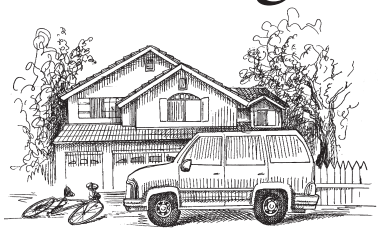
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

It's a Living



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

THE other day I met a very bright and beautiful young woman who had been introduced to me as "a dating columnist." As an old married guy, I am long past the dating stage of life, and our encounter was on far less intimate terms, but I was curious to know what a dating columnist *does*. "Well," she explained helpfully, "I go on dates. Then I write about them."

As Carlyle said: Blessed is he who has found his work. And what a variety of work there is in this postindustrial society! A glance through the postings on craigslist, a popular classifieds website, turns up dozens of job titles whose manner of contributing to the Gross National Product one can only guess at: Infotainment engineer; Barista; Supply Chain Specialist; Dependency Resource Coordinator; Flash Developer; UI Designer; Data Miner; Phlebotomist; Esthetician . . . What do these people *do* for their weekly paycheck? Is a Barista related in any way to the portly gents in horsehair wigs who plead for their clients in English courtrooms? Does a Supply Chain Specialist specialize in supplying chains, or in chaining supplies? Do Data Miners have lamps on their hats? Esthetician I think I get: Since a Mortician deals with dead people (Latin *mors, mortis*—death), an Esthetician's clients are presumably beautiful people (Greek *aisthetes*—one who perceives, with the common extension to sensual appreciation), or people who wish to be made beautiful—something to do with cosmetics or personal training, perhaps.

For a really luxuriant proliferation of job titles, Ed Biz is the place to go. My daughter's modest suburban high school held an orientation session for parents of freshmen a few weeks ago. There we all were in the school auditorium, facing a phalanx of school employees up on the stage . . . none of whom was a teacher. Administrators, Directors, Advisors, Psychologists, a Dean, five Guidance Counselors (under, of course, a Director of Guidance), Administrative Assistants . . . all this for eleven hundred students. I cornered the Director of Mathematics, a very cordial fellow, to ask if he himself did any, you know, *teaching*. No, he regretted to say, he didn't. No time!

At colleges this is all raised to the fourth power. I wrote some commentary on the recent news item about residence-hall indoctrination sessions in political correctness at the University of Delaware. To get some background, I waded into their website. There were the university employees, smiling out at me from the thumbnail pictures in their little biographies on the site: the Director for Residence Life, with—of course!—her Associate Director and three Assistant Directors; the Assistant Vice President for Affirmative Action and Multicultural Programs; the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and International Programs; the Assistant Vice President for Labor Relations and Human Resources; and so on, and on, down through the administrative food chain to lowly Financial Aid Advisors and Assistant Librarians. I have seen it written somewhere that a typical big American university has more administrators running it than had British India. This may well be true.

And why not, after all? The Chinese philosopher Shang Yang (4th century B.C.) taught that there were no worthwhile occupations other than farming and fighting. He grudgingly admitted that a nation needed a ruler, but believed that if the laws were properly devised and enforced, the ruler would have nothing to do. Still less did a nation need politicians. He wrote: "The means, whereby a country is made prosperous, are agriculture and war. Now, those who seek office and rank, never do so by means of agriculture and war, but by artful words and empty doctrines."

Speaking as a person who made a poor soldier and would likely fare even worse as a farmer, I am glad that Shang Yang's doctrines did not prevail. Those faces smiling out from the thumbnail pictures on the University of Delaware website all look like terrifically nice people. Probably they have children to feed and mortgage payments to meet. Probably they have no more inclination to farming or fighting than I have. Why should they not have jobs to go to? "Pasture for all the sheep," as Sir Robert Walpole used to say of political patronage.

In fact, though I think a fully Shangian reductionism was never attained anywhere in historical times—even steppe nomads had their shamans and tent-makers—job categories were few over large parts even of the Western world until recently. Researching the lives of 19th-century mathematicians, who had a marked tendency to be the offspring of country pastors, I was struck by the poverty of employment choices for persons in Europe at that time. Outside the great metropolitan centers, if you were not a peasant or an aristocrat, you were a doctor, a clergyman, or an artisan. This state of affairs continued until well within living memory. Here is Ireland during the 1920s, from Anthony Cronin's biography of Flann O'Brien: "Ireland had few institutions of any size. Even in the British days, 'a job under the government' had been looked on as the solution for most of life's difficulties." For big swathes of the human race, in Ireland and elsewhere, it still is.

There is, I think, a common tendency, especially among conservatives, to deplore the fact that so few of us are employed at making things or growing things. There is something naggingly *ignoble* about a nation of paper shufflers and "symbol manipulators," Administrative Assistants and Dependency Resource Coordinators. Instead of turning raw materials into structured objects, or soil and sunlight into food, most of us seem to be *increasing* local entropy—creating busyness and disorder where once all was stasis and simplicity.

No doubt an economist would dismiss this as idle prejudice, pointing to the security and prosperity of our lives as proof that what is, is good. I suppose he would be right, and I don't really begrudge that young lady her work as a "dating columnist." Probably any one of our ancestors—those unnumbered multitudes of peasants, soldiers, artisans, and priests—would have given a limb to work as an Esthetician or Associate Director for Residence Life, with a cozy cubicle in an air-conditioned office. **NR**

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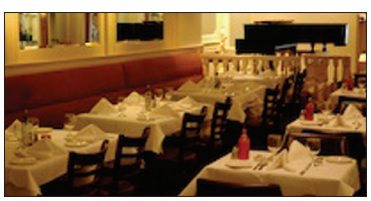

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Impeach Bush?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 26

It's not as it was with Nixon. The thought of Nixon is impossible now except under the shadow of Watergate—which would have meant impeachment and probable conviction. But it isn't widely remembered that there was a movement to impeach Nixon before Watergate—over the bombing in Cambodia. I remember a moment, in the course of a debate with Arthur Schlesinger Jr. before a huge crowd of students, when I ridiculed the idea of impeaching President Nixon.

"I never came out for impeaching him," Schlesinger said.

"Ah," said I, "but you are a vice president or whatever of Americans for Democratic Action and they have come out for impeachment."

"I wasn't present at that meeting," Schlesinger said tensely.

An amusing and instructive aftermath came in the limo in which we were both driven off to a reception. Schlesinger sat in the back seat next to his mother, the widow of the hugely respected historian Arthur Schlesinger Sr. "Arthur," she said sternly, "you should not have come out for impeaching the president."

"Mother, I didn't. I wasn't even there."

What amused especially was Mother Schlesinger's refusing to take her son's word for it and sticking to her opposition. "Your father would never have come out for impeachment."

The dividing line is between plain partisanship and Constitution-bending to advance a political cause. Several thousand convened in Washington last spring demanding the impeachment of President Bush. The moving spirit of this enterprise is Ramsey Clark, who would be in favor of impeaching St. Peter if Peter gave out the least emanation in favor of a Republican president. So Clark continues to live in jerkdom, but that does not alter the fact that there are people out there who believe the time has come for impeachment.

The rules for impeachment were drawn up by a Constitutional Convention that was seeking means by which the checks and balances among the different branches of government might be enforced. The constitutional provision explicitly applies to "the President, Vice President and all civil officers of the United States"—which includes federal judges.

The president, like those other "civil officers," can be removed from office if impeached by the House and convicted by two-thirds of the Senate. The impeachment-minded succeeded, in the post–Civil War fever, in impeaching President Andrew Johnson, but didn't get enough votes to convict him. Nixon almost certainly would have been impeached over Watergate, but Tricky Dick coped with that threat by resigning. Still, a presidential impeachment lay ahead—that of Bill Clinton. He was impeached by the House for lying to a grand jury and for obstruction of justice, but the Senate declined to follow through, and Clinton was free to accept his next honorary degree.

What stands out this time around is that there are no serious people urging impeachment. By "serious" is here intended, men and women of sobriety who weigh conscientiously what constitutes impeachable presidential behavior.

Mr. Bush is swimming in very low political tides. Although he beat down with ease the outrageous charges of Congressman Stark of California, it is striking that a member of Congress felt free to indulge in that level of public obloquy. There was enough of that for Bush in the election of 2006, which was interpreted, reasonably, as a repudiation of his leadership.

If ours were a form of government patterned after that of the Europeans, Bush would probably have been replaced as leader of his party. But the majority of the American people still think of him as a man of good will and very stout heart who is pursuing his duties as he sees them, a man, moreover, of conspicuous incorruptibility. Let the people pronounce on his stewardship in November 2008.

Illegalizing Illegals

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 2

The shooting war in New York over the question of driver's licenses for illegal aliens dramatizes several features of U.S. culture. The first of these is that the right to drive a car is the most cherished right in America, of special, sizzling importance to young people.

It is easy to understand why. Driving a car is a sign of arrival at maturity. In my own history I remember struggling over the matter of residence. My parents had two homes, one in Connecticut and one in South Carolina. In Connecticut, the age for a driver's license was the orthodox 16. Young residents of the state were easily identifiable as making up the throng who arrived at the Department of Motor Vehicles one day after their 16th birthday, to let not one more minute pass before their blooding as independent Americans. But if I had been officially a South Carolinian, I'd have been able to drive at age 13. There was left over the problem of handling one's parents.

It crept into civil consciousness that the suspension of the right to drive was a huge weapon. Bill Clinton, when he was governor of Arkansas some seasons back, caused a furor when he announced that he had a weapon he was prepared to use against teenagers who didn't complete high school: no driver's license. Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota has more recently proposed deploying that final leverage, and research advises that as many as 18 states are experimenting with limiting the right to drive as a means of affecting behavior.

Other considerations than children's hysterical appetites have come into sight, notably those of illegal immigration and national security. We learn that the 19 people who engineered 9/11 had among them a collection of 63 driver's licenses. Were these critical enablers? After all, you don't need a driver's license to slash a pilot's throat. But you do need a driver's license, or a passport, to board the plane in the first place, and so the security people became exercised on the subject.

We walked into a nicely democratic cavil. One of the parties to this debate, New York state senator Bill Larkin,

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quotes the organization 9/11 Families for a Secure America: "The driver's license is the basic identification document for nearly everyone in America. When the terrorists needed places to claim as a residence, they used their licenses as 'ID' for signing their leases. When they opened the bank accounts that they used to place the financing for the conspiracy, they used their licenses as ID. When they rented cars, rented motel rooms, when they paid tuition for their flying lessons, they used their licenses to 'identify' themselves."

In the raging quarrel in New York, a parliamentary point is introduced: What gave Gov. Eliot Spitzer the authority to specify, without consulting the state legislature, who qualified for a driver's license? That is among the criticisms leveled at Governor Spitzer's decision to allow illegals to acquire driver's licenses.

The governor argues that doing so will actually strengthen law enforcement, by bringing illegals "out of the shadows." But this is only part of the larger question, which is: How do we treat illegals?

Some years ago, in California, it was proposed that we should not fork over money to educate illegals, or to pay their doctors' bills. Proposition 187 passed handily, but opponents promptly took it to court, on the grounds that whether a person is legally in the United States or illegally here, he is nevertheless a person, and as such protected by the terms of the 14th Amendment.

So, a nice try by Governor Spitzer, but no cigar. He and his party will need to come up with measures more substantive than wordplay to cope with this problem, which derives from progressive assaults on the powers and responsibilities of nationhood.

One Up for the Donors

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 6

THE Foundation Management Institute lets out what can only be described as a screech of joy. The cause? "Judge Neil Shuster [of Trenton] ruled that the Robertson family is entitled to its day in court. At issue is control of the family's donations to the Robertson Foundation—a fund now approaching $900 million." The point of the suit: William Robertson maintains that his parents gave the money to the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs specifically to train students to work for the U.S. government. Princeton claims that the Robertsons gave Princeton the money, period.

The FMI bulletin goes on to quote brief summaries of the meaning of the Robertson decision. A story in the *Washington Post* is headlined, "Exacting Donors Reshape College Giving." Joe Bull, a development official at Ohio State, is quoted: "[Donor activism is] a wave that is coming and coming fast." The Robertson decision has sent "chills down administrators' spines." The Associated Press cited Martha Dean, head of development at Bryn Mawr: "I wouldn't say it has scared us [but] we certainly have observed it and thought, 'There but for the grace of God . . .'" And the *New York Times*, after examining scores of U.S. foundations, published an article whose headline says it all: "Donors Gone, Trusts Veer from Their Wishes."

The problem of the misuse of donors' gifts is far from new. This critic wrote about the question for *The Freeman* magazine back in 1954. The contentions in that case were very pointed. When the A. P. Smith Company gave $1,500 to Princeton, a dissenting stockholder sued. What, he demanded to know, goes on at Princeton that has to do with the health and welfare of A. P. Smith, which manufactures valves and hydrants?

It's this simple, Princeton argued. In order for A. P. Smith to prosper it has to work in a free-market society in which profits are solicited, not scorned. A witness for Princeton was Irving Olds, former chairman, no less, of U.S. Steel. He spoke in great detail about the issues at stake: "With the good educational facilities provided by [private universities], the courses of instruction will and do lead the student body to recognize the virtues and achievements of our well-proven economic system; and, on the other hand, to discover the faults and weaknesses of an arbitrary, government-directed and -controlled system of production and distribution."

With the allowances that are necessarily taken in the art of reductionism, this would seem to mean that if you studied at Princeton, you would tend to register as a Republican, rather than as a Democrat. "It is perhaps relevant," I wrote in that *Freeman* article, "to quote some figures from a poll conducted at Yale in the fall of 1952. This poll revealed that the undergraduate body was about 2–1 for the Republican party. The faculty, however, was 2–1 in favor of the Democratic party. The Law School was 14–1 Democratic; the Divinity School, 13–2." And while the undergraduates were heavily Republican, the graduate school was described by the *Yale Daily News* as "solidly Democratic."

"This would indicate," I continued, "that Mr. Olds's thesis that the more education you get the more conservative you get, is far from realistic; that it is more nearly the other way around, since we must assume that professors are better educated than students."

The plaintiff in the Smith suit said in court that he would withdraw the lawsuit if responsible officials of Princeton came on the stand and acknowledged that it was a purpose of the university to further free-market principles.

"You must be kidding," was the implied answer. And yet the court, back in the 1950s, found for Princeton.

What hadn't been defined was what exactly are the rights of donors in such situations. According to the Foundation Management Institute, which counsels wealthy families in their philanthropic activities, the Robertson decision establishes that such rights exist. Neal Freeman, the chairman of the institute, closes his bulletin by saying: "I ask you to listen carefully. Do you hear it? That large bang for the small buck? Have we not played a part in epochal change? We believe that we have, and we can thus say with equal parts of respect and emphasis . . . we won a big one today. And yes, we're fully prepared to build on this signal victory for the vision and values of charitable donors."

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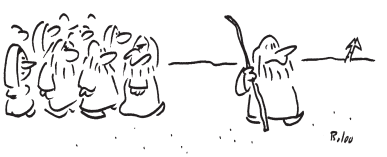

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MARK STEYN

The Change Artists

WHAT do you think is the critical issue in this election season? Personally, I blow hot and cold. I used to think the key issue facing the nation was "hope." But now I wonder if perhaps it isn't "change." It was only last year that I bought *The Audacity of Hope* by this fellow called Barack Obama. How audacious hope seemed back then! How bold, how courageous! But now, a mere twelve months later, hope seems cheap, glib, easy.

"There has been a lot of talk in this campaign about the politics of hope," said this guy in Iowa the other day. "But understand this: The politics of hope doesn't mean hoping that things come easy." It turned out to be the same Barack Obama who'd been going on about the audacity of hope. But now he's fine-tuned his campaign, and he's running on "change."

No, don't yawn. Hillary Clinton may be running around New Hampshire on her "Ready for Change" tour, but that kind of facile focus-group change is just the same-old-same-old. "Change can't just be a slogan," says Senator Obama, who's committed to a Democratic party "that doesn't just offer change as a slogan but real, meaningful change, change that America can believe in. That's why I'm in this race, that's why I'm running for the presidency of the United States, to offer change that we can believe in."

Any cynical hack pol can offer change as a slogan, but Senator Obama's offering "Change You Can Believe In" as a slogan. It's on the side of his "Change You Can Believe In" campaign bus. "I don't want to settle," he declared in Bettendorf, Iowa, "for anything less than real change, fundamental change, change we need, change we can believe in." Obama is reshaping the debate: He's changing the way we think about change. As his chief strategist, James Axelrod, told *Politico*, the senator is arguing for "real and authentic change, not synthetic change." He's passionately opposed to "synthetic change," mentioning no names. If you're looking for a synthetic-change candidate, sorry, he's not your guy. Include him out. He'll change his hair, he'll change his tie, but he won't change his fierce righteous opposition to synthetic change.

In the stirring words that conclude his new TV ad in New Hampshire: "This is Barack Obama. I approve this message to ask you to believe—not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington. I'm asking you to believe in yours." I was so enthused I tore off my old "I'm Pro-Hope and I Vote" bumper sticker and replaced it with "I'm Pro-Change and I Believe." Ask not what you can change for your country, ask what your country can change for you. "I am here," Obama told the crowd at the Jefferson-Jackson dinner, "because I feel a fierce urgency that the time for change is now."

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The Democrats are the party of stasis: On affirmative action, there can be no change; on abortion absolutism, there can be no change; even on a less cobwebbed shibboleth such as the Iraq War, there can be no change—they've booked the band and caterers for the big Defeat Parade and no matter what happens on the ground in Baghdad and Anbar they're not going to change their plans. To his credit, on Social Security Senator Obama raised ever so tentatively the prospect that there might have to be just the teensy-weensiest little tweakette of a change to keep the wheels from coming off the entitlement bus, and immediately he got clobbered by Paul Krugman and Democrat activists as a pathetic stooge for the heartless Right's plans to get rid of the whole racket.

In the Democratic party, "change" is a buzzword but not a meaningful concept. Insofar as they want "change" at all, they only want more of the same—more entitlements, more regulation, more incremental government annexation of health care. Barack Obama doesn't want to "change" the minimum wage, he merely wants to increase it annually, "so American workers aren't falling behind." He seems to think the minimum-wage workforce is not a rotating population of persons en route to or in between other jobs but a fixed pool of employees. Like taking a job at John Edwards's dad's mill, getting a minimum-wage gig is a career for life: You start your minimum-wage job in 1982 and you retire in 2027, still at minimum wage. So you'd be in big trouble without Obama's annual wage increase, and no doubt (in his second term) mandatory health care and paid vacations.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The Democrats are the party of stasis.

This is a very complacent kind of "change." Indeed, for the most part, the Democrat programs are about change you *can't* believe in, not if you're a rational human being with an eye to basic math. But Democrats, like the European political class, give the impression that all the great questions have been decided. As Goethe's Faust puts it:

> *When to the moment I shall say*
> *'Linger awhile! so fair thou art!'*
> *Then mayst thou fetter me straightway,*
> *Then to the abyss will I depart!*

That's how the Continentals feel about their post–Second World War Eutopian moment: "Linger awhile! so fair thou art!" Yes, all the entitlements are unsustainable in the long term and will plunge them into the abyss, but who cares about the long term if we can just live in one unchanging moment? President Sarkozy is trying to persuade his electorate of what ought to be obvious—that a society in which half the workforce are employed by the state and retire in their 50s with free health care can never make that arithmetic add up. In France, "the time for change" really is now, in the sense that that roaring sound you hear is one almighty waterfall just round the bend. But in democratic societies "real change" is a tough sell, and in this campaign season no Democrat is minded to try it. NR

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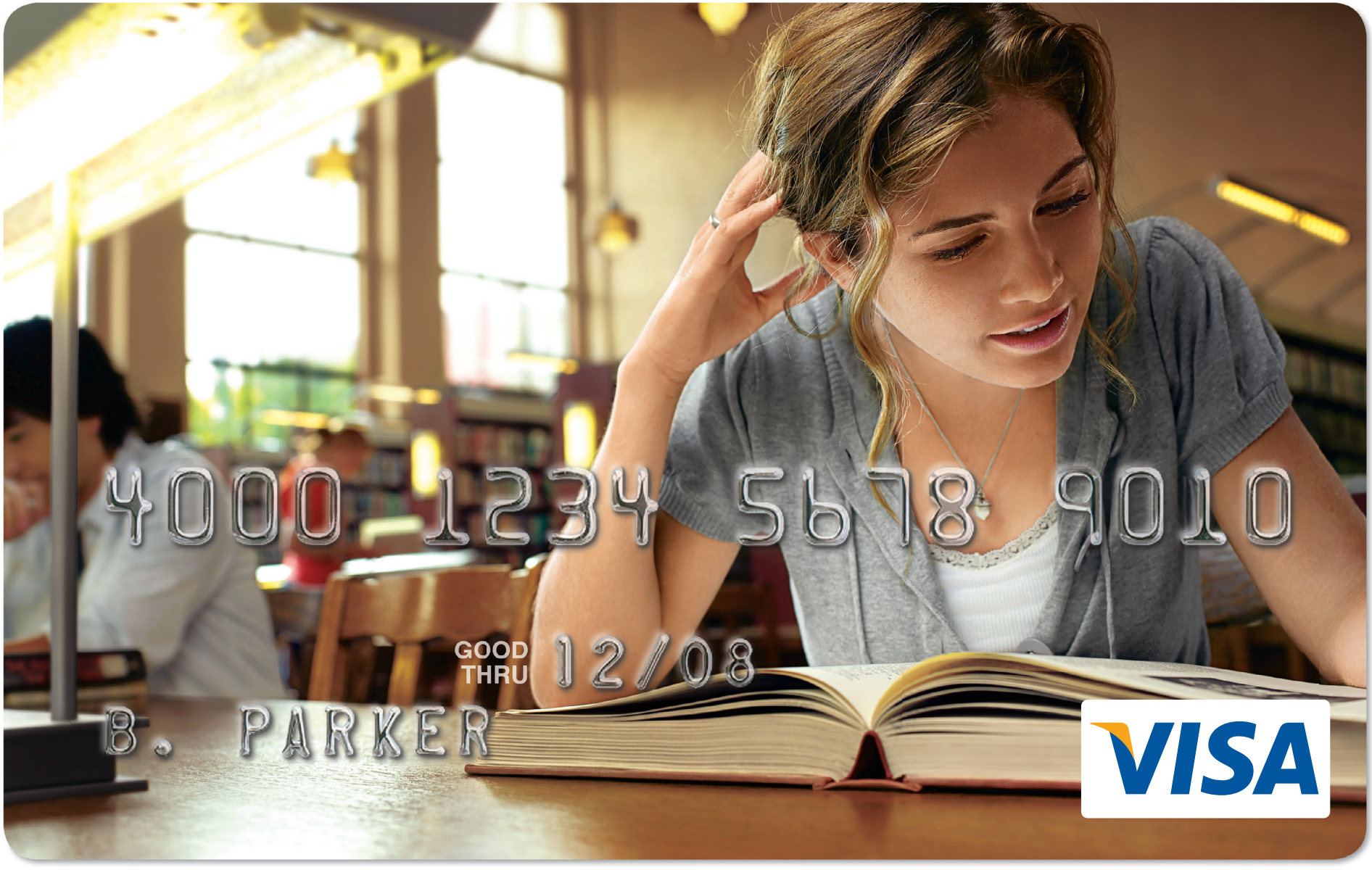

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